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Hafa Adai!

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UNDER PALACIOS' PROPOSED BUDGET

'124 employees will be out of jobs'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan is concerned that, if Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' proposed budget for the municipality in fiscal year 2024 is enacted, about 124 Tinian Mayor's Office employees will be out of jobs come Oct. 1, 2023. *See TINIAN on Page 4*

» **Aldan says he has never seen a budget proposal that excludes a mayor's office from general fund; if left with no choice, he will go to court**

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan is interviewed by the local media.

Court denies stay on Toyota dealership

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has rejected Anaks Ocean View Hill Saipan Homeowners Association's request for a stay on the Zoning permit issued to Atkins Kroll to build a Toyota/Lexus dealership *See COURT on Page 4*

CUC hazard pay raise OK'd

Tenorio

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors approved Friday the CUC management's recommendation to raise the hazardous premium pay for certain CUC *See CUC on Page 4*

OAG: Torres does not come with clean hands

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General wants to depose former governor Ralph DLG Torres in order to find out how much public funds were used to pay his four attorneys who represented him while he was still the governor. *See TORRES on Page 4*

Torres

CHANGE OF COMMAND U.S. MARINE CORPS/LANCE CPL. GARRETT GILLESPIE

CNMI Gov. Arnold Palacios, left, presents an award to U.S. Marine Corps Col. Christopher L. Bopp, who is the outgoing commanding officer for Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz, during a change of command ceremony at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, July 10, 2023. Bopp relinquished command of Camp Blaz to Col. Ernest Govea after serving as the commanding officer since May of 2021. The change of command ceremony is an honored tradition, which signifies the transfer of command responsibility from one commander to another. ***See story on Page 2***

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
81

INSIDE

LOCAL
OWWA will be doing an outreach to Filipino foreign workers in the Northern Marianas.
PAGE 5

OVERDRIVE
The 2023 Nissan Versa is the least-expensive in America, starting at $15,830, according to Cox Automotive.
PAGE 14

LIFE & STYLE
"Speak Now (Taylor's Version)" is here. It is the third release of the six albums she plans to re-record.
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Local

80-month sentence for man in drug trafficking case

HAGATÑA, Guam—Nicholas Alexander Aguon, 34, from Stockton, California, has been sentenced in the District Court of Guam to 80 months in prison for drug trafficking.

The court also ordered five years of supervised release and a $100 mandatory special assessment fee for Aguon, who was convicted of conspiracy to distribute 50 or more grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride.

Defendants convicted of a federal drug offense may no longer qualify for certain federal benefits.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which prosecuted the case, Aguon traveled to Guam from Stockton, California, in 2017. He began distributing methamphetamine from two Tumon hotel rooms to numerous persons. The investigation also revealed that Aguon received large sums of money in his personal accounts and returned the proceeds back to his California supplier using money remitter services. The drug transactions were facilitated using cell phones and Facebook messenger. Aguon sold over a pound of methamphetamine before the distribution was detected by law enforcement.

"The sentence in this case sends a message of deterrence to those seeking to distribute drugs in Guam," said Shawn N. Anderson, who is the U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. "Combatting drug crime remains an important priority for our law enforcement partners. I applaud their efforts."

"[Homeland Security Investigations] is committed to investigating drug traffickers who trade in methamphetamine," said John F. Tobon, special agent in charge, HSI Honolulu. "Criminals like Aguon who distribute this poison will be investigated and prosecuted to stop the flow of dangerous drug into our communities."

This investigation was conducted by the HSI and prosecuted by Rosetta L. San Nicolas, assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Guam. ***(PR)***

Camp Blaz changes command

By DIANN ROSENFELD
MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP BLAZ

Col. Christopher L. Bopp relinquished command of Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz to Col. Ernest Govea last July 10, 2023 during a change of command ceremony held at the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing hangar on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

Bopp, a career infantry officer, took command of MCB Camp Blaz in May 2021. During his time as MCB Camp Blaz commanding officer he was responsible for setting the conditions for the realignment of forces from Japan to Camp Blaz. Additionally, during his tenure MCB Camp Blaz was reactivated, marking the first newly constructed Marine Corps Base since 1952.

During the ceremony Bopp, was awarded a Legion of Merit for his superior leadership, his ability to enhance local and regional partnerships, and his astuteness in refining quality control processes for Camp Blaz construction efforts.

Maj. Gen. Stephen E. Liszewski, commanding general Marine Corps Installations Pacific, was the reviewing officer for the ceremony and provided opening remarks.

"Gov. Leon Guerrero, we heard you loud and clear during the reactivation ceremony… you charged the Commandant to ensure that the relationship between the Marine Corps and Guam was built on respect," said Liszewski. "The entire approach Chris took during his tenure here was built on a foundation of respect… taking care of people, respecting history, respecting culture, respecting the environment, and respecting the water."

After Liszewski's remarks the Governor of Guam provided remarks and presented Bopp with a Maga'håga Award. The governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Tinian Mayor's Council on behalf of the Tinian mayor, the 37th Guam Legislature, and the Mayors' Council of Guam also provided remarks and presented Bopp with plaques of appreciation.

"I've done everything I can to take care of this community," said Bopp. "We're protecting the people who are the heart and soul of this island. This has been a fantastic tour, and my wife and I have loved to be here with [the Marines and civilians of Camp Blaz]."

At the end of his remarks, Govea, MCB Camp Blaz's newest commanding officer, turned to the formation and addressed the Camp Blaz Marines, "as we continue to serve in the Western Pacific Theater, I personally will be a Marine of action, committed to taking care of you and your families."

The change of command ceremony was attended by friends, colleagues, and family. In attendance were the governors of Guam and CNMI; senators from the 37th Legislature; village mayors and vice-mayors; representatives from Delegate Moylan's office; members of the Consular Corps from the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Korea, Republic of Palau, Japan and the Philippines; and delegates from the Northern Mariana Islands, among others. Guam Army National Guard's 721st Band provided music for the ceremony.

Bank of Guam reopens in Mangilao

» All branches resume normal operating hours Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced yesterday the reopening of its Mangilao branch effective today, July 11, 2023. The branch will resume normal operating hours, welcoming customers Monday to Friday from 9am to 4:pm.

The Mangilao branch was closed since late May after Typhoon Mawar. The reopening of the Mangilao branch brings all Bank of Guam branches back to regular operations. All transactions are being accepted.

"We're happy and ready to welcome customers back to our Mangilao branch," said Joaquin P. L.G. Cook, Bank of Guam's president and chief executive officer. "A huge thank you to the amazing community of Mangilao and our valued customers for your incredible patience while our team worked tirelessly to reopen the branch for you. Although the typhoon brought its set of challenges, it has never dampened our spirits or our commitment to serving our people and to rebuild stronger every day."

As a friendly reminder, Bank of Guam's Familia Contact Center, along with their Online and Mobile Banking services, are available 24/7. ***(PR)***

NWS: Flood watch is in effect until tonight

A flood watch is in effect on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian through late Tuesday night and flash flooding caused by excessive rainfall is possible.

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center-State Warning Point, deeper tropical moisture and surface troughing continue to lift north out of Micronesia and spread across the Marianas. Multiple rounds of heavy showers and thunderstorms are possible through Tuesday night, possibly leading to flash flooding.

Excessive runoff may result in flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, and other low-lying and flood-prone locations. Flooding may occur in poor drainage and urban areas. Storm drains and ditches may become clogged with debris.

The public is encouraged to report observed flooding to local emergency services or law enforcement and request they pass this information to NWS when you can do so safely.

Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are advised to monitor later forecasts and be alert for possible flood warnings. Those living in areas prone to flooding should be prepared to take action should flooding develop. If living near streams and rivers, prepare to move items away from stream and river banks. Make sure storm drains nearby are not clogged, especially in low-lying areas. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Man sues USCIS for denying his long-term application

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man is suing U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and is asking the U.S. District Court for the NMI to order the agency to grant him CNMI long-term residency.

Sukesh Chandra Barman, through attorney Joseph Horey, has filed a complaint for judicial review and declaratory and injunctive relief against USCIS and is asking the federal court to review USCIS' decision to deny his CNMI long-term residency application.

"The grant of [CNMI residency] status to plaintiff was unlawfully withheld by the director, and the denial of his application was short of statutory right and not in accordance with law. In particular, the director's finding that plaintiff had not 'resided continuously and lawfully' in the CNMI for the requisite time period was erroneous as a matter of law and resulted from a misconstruction of the Relief Act," Horey argues.

The lawsuit named Rebecca Maliuwelur, in her official capacity as director of USCIS Guam field office, as respondent.

As relief, Barman wants the District Court for the NMI to issue an order declaring that his application met all the statutory criteria of eligibility for CNMI residency status as set forth in the Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Residents Relief Act or U.S. Public Law 116-24.

In addition, Barman wants the court to order USCIS' Guam field office to approve his application and grant him CNMI residency status, and issue him all appropriate documentation for such a status.

On or about June 25, 2019, U.S. Public Law 1 16-24 or the Relief Act was signed into law by then-President Donald Trump. It established a new federal immigration status known as NM-1 for long-term residents of the CNMI who met certain qualifications.

Persons with NM-1 status are authorized to reside and work in the CNMI indefinitely without necessity of any other immigrant visa or work visa.

NM-1 status was available for a limited time only. USCIS only accepted applications for such status between Feb. 19, 2020 and Aug. 17, 2020.

Barman applied for NM-1 status on or about April 29, 2020. Horey claims Barman met all the criteria of eligibility for NM-1 status outlined in the Relief Act, but USCIS denied his application on Dec. 30, 2021.

He sought reconsideration of the denial on March 22, 2022, but it was denied by the director on Oct. 14, 2022.

MANAGAHA-BOUND KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The twin-hulled traditional vessel Alingano Maisu picks up passengers at the Smiling Cover Marina for a day trip to Managaha last Saturday so people could pay their respects to Carolinian Chief Aghurub, who is buried on the island.

THROUGH THE LENS OF FAITH: THEN, NOW, AND BEYOND

Photo contest aims to capture CNMI's 40 years as a diocese

Catholicism in the Northern Mariana Islands can be considered one of the oldest in the world. As a strategic place of rest for Spanish voyagers from the Latin Americas to Southeast Asia and other Pacific Island nations and back, one may even argue that it may even be as old as 500 years old, if not older. But even with a long history of Christianity in the region, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands did not become a diocese until November 1984. Next year, 2024, with great joy and anticipation, we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of our diocese's canonical formation.

In preparation for the diocese's 40th founding anniversary, the Diocesan Media Ministry and the Diocesan Youth Commission is spearheading a photo contest depicting the imprint, impact, or influence of the Catholic Church in the CNMI. The following are the dynamics of the competition.

■ This contest is open to all photo enthusiasts, professionals, or hobbyists;

■ Only one photo entry is allowed per participant;

■ Photos must depict the imprint, impact, influence, or future of the diocese. Photos must be original and must include a brief description;

■ Entries should be submitted to photo@rcdck.org on or before Sept. 30, 2023;

■ For better print quality, photo submissions must follow the following specifications: 12.25" x 12.25" in size with 350 dpi resolution;

■ Eligible photos will be posted in our diocesan Facebook page for general engagement (likes, hearts, shares);

■ Photos will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Originality = 25 pts.
2. Creativity = 25 pts.
3. Relevance to the theme = 25 pts.
4. Visual Impact = 25 pts.

■ Twelve winners will be selected and announced but only one will be proclaimed the grand winner. Winning photos will be featured in our 2024 calendar;

■ Prizes and certificates will be awarded to the 12 winners;

For more information, contact the Diocesan Curia at (670) 234-3000. We look forward to seeing your beautiful shots. ***(PR)***

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Available for Public Review & Comment
PY2023 Annual Action Plan
July 11, 2023

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) announces the availability for public review and comment, the Program Year 2023 Annual Action Plan (AAP).

The AAP is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development, for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds received by NMHC. NMHC is the Grantee of these HUD funds. NMHC administers CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs on behalf of the CNMI.

The PY2023 AAP identifies NMHC's proposed use of HUD PY2023 CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds totaling $1,550,603.00. A detailed list of the proposed projects and activities are shown below.

Community Development Block Grant		Project Sponsor	Project Type	Project Type
1	Childcare Facility (Rota)	Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA)	Public Facility	$ 450,000.00
2	Multi-Purpose Stage Facility (Rota)	Office of the Mayor of Rota	Public Facility	$230,000.00
4	Community Pavilion Shelters (Rota)	Office of the Mayor of Rota	Public Facility	$104,100.00
5	Planning and Administrative Costs	Northern Marianas Housing Corporation	Planning and Administrative Costs	$196,025.00
	Total			**$980,125.00**
Emergency Solutions Grant		**Project Sponsor**	**Project Type**	**Project Type**
7	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Assistance/ Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services	NMHC	Homeless Prevention/ Rapid Rehousing	$ 68,119.25
8	ESG Administrative Cost	NMHC	Program Administration	$ 6,090.75
9	Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	NMHC	HMIS	$ 7,000.00
	Total			**$ 81,210.00**
HOME Investment Partnership Grant		**Project Sponsor**	**Project Type**	**Project Type**
10	HOME Rehabilitation/ Homebuyer New Construction Program	NMHC	Affordable Housing	$ 415,877.80
11	HOME Administration	NMHC	Program Administration	$ 73,390.20
	Total			**$ 489,268.00**

The AAP will be available electronically on NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net. If you would like to obtain a copy or require additional information please contact Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director at 234-6866 or by email at deputydirector@nmhcgov.net.

NMHC is inviting the public to comment on the proposed AAP. A public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 5:00 pm at the NMHC Main Office Conference Room, Garapan; Tinian Field Office, San Jose Tinian-NMC Bldg. A; Rota Field Office, Sinapalo III

Any person(s), agency, or organization wishing to comment on the AAP are encouraged to do so by submitting written comments to the NMHC main office at Garapan, Saipan, and/or to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, no later than 4:30 pm Friday, August 11, 2023. Written comments may also be submitted via facsimile at (670)234-9021 or by submitting via email to deputydirector@nmhcgov.net. Comments must be received no later than 4:30 pm Friday, August 11, 2023. Should you require special accommodations, please contact Ms. Mafnas, at the NMHC main office, at 670-234-6866.

Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director
This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD CPD funds

TINIAN

From page 1

Speaking before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee's Fiscal 2024 budget hearing for the Tinian municipality yesterday, Aldan described the proposed budget as "unbalanced" and "frustrating" for the municipality. He said he has been in politics for over 20 years and that he has never seen a budget proposal that excludes a mayor's office from the general fund.

"Not only is this budget unbalanced but the people of Tinian will not be provided the same public services as the rest of the CNMI," he said. "We are not simply talking about numbers here. We are playing with people's lives."

Aldan said the governor's submission of the budget provides the Tinian Mayor's Office with only one full-time employee—or an FTE—and that is his position as mayor.

Moreover, he pointed out, it does not provide a single dollar from the general fund for the operation of the entire municipality.

Aldan noted that there are legal issues involved and that he does not want to sue the Palacios administration. However, if his hands are tied and the people of Tinian are left struggling, it will leave him with no choice but to go to court.

Aldan submitted a budget request of $10.7 million, but Palacios' budget proposal of $4.6 million, reflects a significant cut of $6.1 million, equivalent to a cut of 57%.

He explained that the Tinian Mayor's Office has 125 FTEs because they are responsible for operating the library, youth center, dog control division, ID division, ground maintenance of nearly all parks and tourist sites on Tinian, building repairs, new project planning, municipal scholarship, the slaughterhouse, the municipal treasury, emergency preparedness, grant writing and management, the Saipan guest house, military liaison, and planning and budget.

Moreover, Aldan said, they assist every state department and agency, including the Public School System, Marianas Visitors Authority, and Tinian Health Center, by providing personnel through a memorandum of understanding.

Without the Tinian Mayor's Office's 124 FTEs, the Tinian municipality "will essentially grind to a halt" as they not only oversee all the state departments on Tinian but they also coordinate with all autonomous agencies on municipal matters.

The mayor said the governor's proposal intends to include $3 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds that is currently being held in the Tinian Municipal Treasury to cover the difference. Aldan said, however, that, as he had explained to Palacios during the governor's council meeting, these funds will not be available on Oct. 1, 2023, as most of the funds have already been allocated.

In fact, he said, as of today, they don't even have a cash balance of $3 million as they have been using these funds for local payroll and operations since the passage of the revised fiscal year 2023 budget.

Regarding the $3 million ARPA funds that Tinian is supposed to use in fiscal year 2024 for personnel and operations, Aldan said that former governor Ralph DLG Torres gave Tinian $3.6 million in ARPA funds last year for Capital Improvement Projects as outlined in the CNMI ARPA Spending Plan. Upon receipt of the funds, the Tinian Legislative Delegation passed Resolution 22-8 identifying the local ARPA CIP projects, to include the veterans cemetery, a new fire station, a Tinian Mayor's Office warehouse, a multi-sports facility, and Taga and Tachogna beach renovations, to name a few, he said.

The mayor said all $3.6 million was allocated and, prior to the passage of the revised fiscal year 2023 budget, some $600,000 had already been spent or encumbered, leaving a balance of $3 million.

He said it wasn't until days before the Legislature's conference committee passed the revised fiscal year 2023 budget did Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita inform him that these funds were incorrectly booked and, instead of being 604 funds, they were actually 602 funds and could be used for personnel and operation.

As a result, Aldan said, the Legislature removed the $225,000 of operating funds that was supposed to be given to the Tinian municipal departments and passed the revised fiscal year 2023 budget.

He said he further explained to Palacios that he has already reallocated most of the funds as follows:

- $294,000 for payroll for 19 municipal FTEs for the remaining of fiscal year 2023.
- $840,000 for payroll for municipal FTEs for fiscal year 2024.
- $320,000 for fiscal years 2023 and 2024 annual events and ground maintenance for tourists sites.
- $100,000 for professional services for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.
- $400,000 for operations for the departments for fiscal year 2023 since no operating funds were appropriated to Tinian for operations.

Therefore, Aldan said, they expect to only have $849,000 in remaining ARPA funds, which still need to be used for their multi sports facility, veterans cemetery, tennis court resurfacing, guest house operations, and municipal department operations for fiscal year 2024.

The mayor said if the 124 employees will be out of jobs, he will not be the one to explain to the people of Tinian why the governor and Legislature were unable to save their jobs when every other job in the entire CNMI was maintained.

Aldan said his request to the Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), is to reinstate all of the 124 FTEs and provide at least $800,000 in operations for the departments.

"If this body is unable to do, come Oct. 1st, 124 Tinian Mayor's Office employees will be out of a job as I do not have an alternative funding source to keep them all employed," he said.

Aldan pointed out that, at the beginning of the Palacios-Apatang administration, there were questions or concerns as to how much ARPA funds were remaining. Six months into the administration, he said, there has never been any reporting or accountability as to how much ARPA funds are still available to supplement the general fund for personnel and operations.

He told committee members that they should first hold the administration accountable for the balance of those funds before they eliminate 124 FTEs from Tinian's budget.

Moreover, Aldan said, there have also been discussions to amend the CNMI ARPA Spending Plan to shift funds to 602 so they can supplement general fund for personnel and operations.

He said Norita stated during the revised fiscal year 2023 budget deliberations that 604 funds have yet to be spent so they (legislators) know there are still tens of millions of dollars of ARPA funds that are unspent.

"Although we might not know the exact balance of ARPA 602 funds, what we do know is that there are still funds available," he said.

In fact, Aldan said, Senate president Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) cited during a recent Senate session a spreadsheet obtained by the Department of Finance indicating that there is $93.4 million in ARPA funds available as of May 31, 2023.

All he is asking is for the Ways and Means Committee to hold the administration accountable for identifying the balance and appropriate the funds for accordingly as it appears there are sufficient ARPA funds available to reinstate all 124 mayor's office FTEs, he added.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

COURT

From page 1

and vehicle repair facility in Puerto Rico.

Superior Court judge pro tem David Wiseman rejected Anaks' request to issue an order stopping the construction project, saying Anaks has not shown adequate justification for granting a stay of conditional use permit.

"Anaks has not met its burden of showing a combination of probable success on the merits and the possibility of irreparable injury. Second, Anaks has not met its burden of showing that serious questions are raised and that the balance of hardships tips sharply in its favor," the judge said.

Also, the judge found that the physical and environmental harms alleged by Anaks are purely speculative and consist of largely unsubstantiated concerns.

"The record demonstrates that these concerns were addressed at length by AK during the permitting process. Anaks' concerns are even more tenuous in view of the fact that, for these concerns to become a reality, AK would have to violate the conditional safeguards embedded in its conditional use permit, an act which itself would subject AK to penalties of $1,000 per day for noncompliance as well as the risk of permit revocation," Wiseman said.

In March 2023, the CNMI Supreme Court ruled that the Superior Court has jurisdiction to review a permit issued by the Commonwealth Zoning Board to Atkins Kroll for the Puerto Rico project. Anaks then requested the Superior Court to issue an order to stop the project.

Atkins Kroll's planned dealership and vehicle repair facility is located next to the Anaks condominium complex in Puerto Rico. On March 18, 2022, the Zoning Board approved Atkins Kroll's application and issued the permit on April 13, 2022. The Anaks homeowners association then filed a petition to challenge the permit in Superior Court. The court, through Wiseman, dismissed the petition, saying it was untimely filed.

But on appeal, the local Supreme Court held that the Anaks petition was timely filed and set aside the dismissal. Following the decision, Anaks renewed its request to review the Zoning Board's decision.

Anaks also requested the court to issue a stay order on the Zoning permit. The court has officially denied the request a second time.

CUC

From page 1

employees from the current 5% to 10%. The hazardous premium pay will take effect July 2, 2023.

This comes after all five directors votes "yes" to the pay raise at the board's regular meeting.

CUC board chair Janice A. Tenorio said yesterday that the hazardous premium pay is important because of the calamities happening and as the employees have families to take care.

At the board meeting, acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje said determinations were made a few years back about hazard pay and the board approved that.

Right now, Terlaje said, meter readers are only getting 5% hazard pay at three hours of work, while employees at the power plant are getting 5% but at eight hours.

She said raising the hazard pay from 5% to 10% would cost CUC $429,000 annually.

Terlaje said hazard pay would only apply when the employee works, and not for those who take a leave.

She said she was at the power plant last week and was in the generator room. "It was over 100 degrees in there. So the conditions that they work under are very different from the conditions working in fresh air outside," she said.

TORRES

From page 1

OAG chief solicitor Robert Glass Jr. has filed a motion before the Superior Court, asking it to order a deposition against Torres in his ongoing petition against the Department of Finance regarding special prosecutor James Kingman's contract.

Glass says the OAG believes that Torres does not come before the court with clean hands and believes a deposition is required to fully ascertain the facts and circumstances of Torres' procurement of attorneys while he was governor.

Glass explained in his motion that Torres petitioned the court to invalidate the contract between the OAG and the special prosecutor on the grounds that the contract did not conform to the procurement regulations. However, Glass said, Torres himself procured several lawyers during his tenure as CNMI governor.

"Torres sought and procured numerous attorneys and government contracts utilizing the same procurement regulations he now accuses the OAG of violating. In order to bring such a claim, Torres will need to have not himself violated such procurement regulations. While the documents from the Department of Finance and the Office of the Governor may provide some insight into the procurement of his attorneys, there are still many questions that only Torres himself can answer in regards to his procurement and payment of attorneys to represent him and the Office of the Governor in his numerous legal battles over the past years," Glass said.

Torres currently has four lawyers defending him—Viola Alepuyo, Anthony Aguon, Matthew Holley, and Victorino Torres—and they have been defending him in his criminal case since he was governor.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Torres, through his defense team, filed a petition for a judicial review of the decision the Department of Finance made in the Kingman case. The DOF and the Office of the Attorney General were named respondents in this matter.

The petition came after Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita declined to rule or address the merits of Torres' request that Kingman's contract with the OAG be declared invalid.

In addition, the agency ruling dismissed Torres' request finding that the department lacks the authority to issue a declaratory ruling because Kingman's contract had already been signed.

As relief, Torres is asking the Superior Court to vacate the DOF's final agency decision on the grounds that the ruling was arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, and contrary to law. The defense also wants the court to rule that the special prosecutor's contract fails to comply with procurement regulations and is therefore void.

Alternatively, Torres asks that the court set aside the DOF's final agency ruling and remand the matter back to the agency for a decision on the merits of his request for declaratory relief by an independent and unbiased hearing officer.

Torres is challenging Kingman's previous contract with the OAG as a special prosecutor in his ongoing criminal case. Torres argues that the contract did not comply with the CNMI's rules of procurement.

The OAG has since filed a motion to dismiss the petition stating multiple errors on Torres' part.

Philippine OWWA sets outreach in NMI on July 17-22

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration of the Philippine government will be doing an outreach to Filipino foreign workers in the Northern Marianas, according to a news release from the Philippine Consulate General-Agaña's Core Volunteer for the CNMI last Sunday.

A three-person team from OWWA Manila will be on Saipan from July 17 to 22, for six-day outreach on many of its programs, including processing of OWWA memberships. The venue of the OWWA outreach will be at the Sun Palace Hotel in Oleai, which is adjacent to the Marianas High School campus. Daily outreach support services will be from 8:30 am to 5pm.

For OWWA membership that covers a period of two years, overseas Filipino workers are required to provide:

- valid employment contract or proof of active employment;
- valid work permit/work visa/CW-1;
- photocopy of passport page showing photo and personal data; and
- accomplished OFW Information Sheet signed by the OFW.
- The OWWA membership fee is $25.

For processing by next-of-kin if the OFW is unable to come in person, OWWA requires:

- valid employment contract or proof of active employment;
- valid work permit/work visa o OFW/CW-1;
- photocopy of passport page showing photo and personal data;
- accomplished OFW Information Sheet signed by the OFW;
- authorization letter from OFW; and
- valid ID of next-of-kin.

The OFW Information Sheet will be made available upon sign up/in-person. OFWs that need to avail of OWWA services are encouraged to visit early the outreach program at the Sun Palace Hotel.

OWWA is also informing the public that Filipinos who are permanent residents and/or green card holders can sign up for the OWWA membership program. They can avail of the Voluntary Membership Program with the following requirements: valid resident permit/permit to stay for work/employment authorization card, proof of payment of contributions to the Social Security System of the host country, copy of pay slip issued by employer and or company or the manpower agency, and certificate of employment issued by the employer. A fee of $25 will also be required.

The OWWA team will also host a dialogue/forum with OFW-CW1 workers and their employers in the CNMI. Details of the date and time will be announced separately. ***(PCG Core Volunteer-CNMI)***

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FLOAT FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The CNMI House of Representatives led by Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez, front, joins the Liberation Parade last July 4, 2023. This was the first time the House of Representatives joined the parade with a float. The Senate did not participate as many senators were unavailable.

USCIS launches online rescheduling of biometrics appointments

» New tool provides option to reschedule a biometric services appointment online without calling the USCIS Contact Center

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has launched a new self-service tool allowing benefit requestors, and their attorneys and accredited representatives, to reschedule most biometric services appointments before the date of the appointment.

Introducing this tool is another way USCIS is improving customer service. By removing barriers and reducing burdens to applicants, USCIS is demonstrating the agency's commitment to advancing the goals of "Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government Mandates" (EO 14058).

"We are working steadily to improve the customer experience by designing and delivering services in a manner that people of all abilities can access," said USCIS director Ur M. Jaddou.

Previously, benefit requestors and accredited representatives could only request to reschedule a biometric services appointment by calling the USCIS Contact Center. With this new tool, those individuals who have or create a USCIS online account can reschedule most requests for biometric services appointments without having to call the Contact Center. The new tool, however, cannot be used to reschedule an appointment that already has been rescheduled two or more times, is within 12 hours, or that has already passed.

The biometric services appointment rescheduling tool can be accessed via a USCIS online account regardless of whether the pending case was submitted online or by mail. Benefit requestors and accredited representatives will still have the option to call the USCIS Contact Center to reschedule an appointment, but USCIS strongly encourages users to use the new tool to save time, increase efficiency, and reduce call volume to the USCIS Contact Center.

USCIS is also issuing guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual to explain that the agency may consider an untimely request to reschedule a biometric services appointment and the effect of failing to appear for an appointment, and to explain how the agency considers a timely request to reschedule a biometric services appointment for "good cause." Good cause exists when the reschedule request provides sufficient reason for the benefit requestor's inability to appear on the scheduled date. Sufficient reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- Illness, medical appointment, or hospitalization;
- Previously planned travel;
- Significant life events such as a wedding, funeral, or graduation ceremony;
- Inability to obtain transportation to the appointment location;
- Inability to obtain leave from employment or caregiver responsibilities; and
- Late delivered or undelivered biometric services appointment notice.

USCIS only accepts untimely rescheduling requests made to the USCIS Contact Center and does not accept untimely requests to reschedule by mail or in-person at a USCIS office or through the myUSCIS online rescheduling tool. ***(USCIS)***

JROTC battalions take part in LibDay Parade

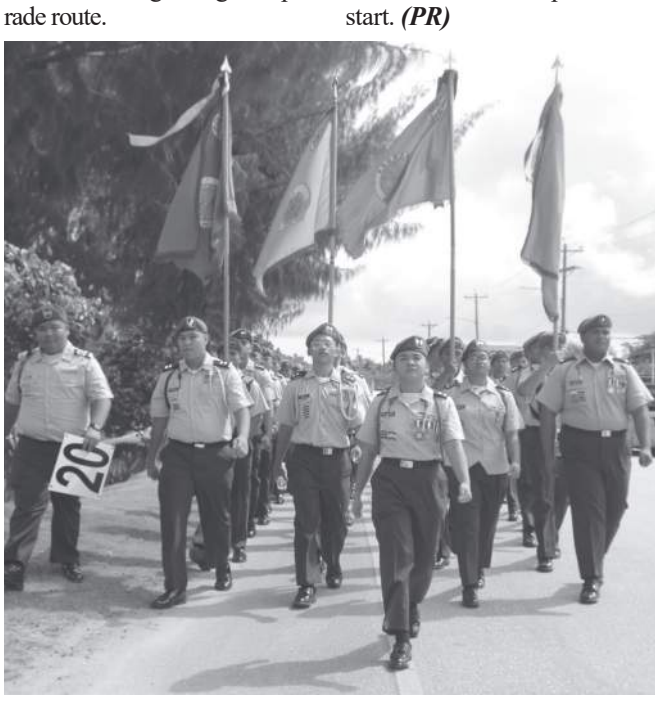
Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets from Saipan Southern High School, Kagman High School, Tinian High School, and Rota High School gathered as a brigade to take part in the Liberation Day Parade last July 4.

Battalion commanders from each school led the whole brigade, followed by the cadets who were carrying their battalion colors. A few cadets and the instructors called cadence while marching along the parade route.

When they were almost near the end point at the Garapan Fishing Base where the reviewing stand was located, the cadets halted and presented arms to the CNMI dignitaries and other special guests.

The cadets had their last formation for the day as soon as they reached the end point of the parade.

Before the parade started, the cadets practiced and were busy preparing until it was time for the parade to start. ***(PR)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps cadets from four schools take part in the Liberation Day Parade last July 4.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC)
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Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE

07/11/2023

Notice for Public Comment

Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming Amount:	Proposed Revised Project Budget:	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 737	CDBG	PY2020 CDBG Planning and Administrative Costs		$192,240.00	($30,000.00)	$162,240.00	$192,240.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($30,000.00)**		
IDIS# 762		Purchase of (2) Rescue Watercraft Vehicles and (2) All-Terrain Vehicles for the CNMI DFEMS	Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS)	$106,000.00	$30,000.00	$136,000.00	$106,000.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($30,000.00)**		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds from Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before August 11, 2023, no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

Guam Guard's Aguon honored at AG Corps Hall of Fame

FORT JACKSON, S.C.—The U.S. Army Adjutant General School honored its very best during a Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, which included the first member of the Guam National Guard, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bernard Aguon of Ordot, Guam.

Aguon is a member of the Guam National Guard, currently assigned to the Army National Guard Bureau as the G1 Senior Personnel Advisor. He is the first member of the Guam Guard to be honored at the AG Hall of Fame.

COURTESY PHOTO

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bernard Aguon, center, with Jennifer Aguon and family, attends the National Adjutant General Ball in Columbia, South Carolina, last June 15, 2023.

Tracing back to 1775, the Adjutant General Corps provides personnel service support by providing human resources services and other types of personnel support. Read about Chief Aguon's journey to the Hall of Fame in the interview below.

Q: What is the AG Hall of Fame, and what does one normally do to be inducted?

A: The Hall honors those who have made positive, lasting and significant contributions that perpetuate the history and traditions of the U.S. Army Adjutant General's Corps. Inductees get a permanent display in the Hall of Honor at the AG School in Fort Jackson.

Q: What led to your being honored as a Distinguished Member of the AG Corps?

A: My induction was a result of managing the sustainment of and improving the case management process of IPPS-A [Integrated Personnel Pay System – Army] during Release 2.

Q: What does it mean to you to achieve this accomplishment?

A: As a human resource professional, this is the pinnacle of acknowledgement in my field and I am extremely humbled and deeply honored to be a part of U.S. Army AG Corps history. As only the second Chamorro following the late CW5 (ret.) Antonio B. Eclavea, I am grateful to have my name permanently engraved alongside Army HR legends. Over the course of the AG Corps' 247-year history these HR experts have assumed responsibility for many critical personnel and administrative support functions serving to sustain America's Army in peace and war. Among these functions are personnel accounting and strength reporting, casualty management, replacement operations, postal operations, morale welfare and recreational support, and a full range of personnel services essential to soldier readiness and commanders' ability to effectively plan and conduct operations. It's an honor to be a part of a branch that is heavily involved in force modernization and programs designed to improve the fighting effectiveness of our Army and we, the AG Corps, continue to develop new and increasingly efficient means of providing timely and dependable personnel support to Commanders and the entire Army family.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add, or anyone you'd like to thank?

A: I never in my wildest dreams would have fathomed making such an indelible impression for not only the Army National Guard but the entire U.S. Army. I was asked once by a junior soldier, 'Chief, how have you been able to serve for over 33 years, what's your secret?' My response was, 'I've taken things and live one day at a time and in doing so, I provide my best effort in whatever I do be it personal or at work each day. I also try to do it with an enjoyable sense of happiness and content.' It hasn't been an easy road to travel but when you knock targets down one at a time (one day at a time), you can eventually look back over 33 plus years and see how much work was accomplished.

None of this of course would be possible without the support of my wife and best friend, Jennifer, who has been my sounding board and No. 1 everything throughout my career. Her patience and that of my children Rocco, Rio, Aurora, Andre, my mom, Annie, and the rest of my family is what keeps me motivated to perform at such high standards. My non-profit support network of the Guam Society of America, which I am currently president, has played a huge role in my success while working in the nation's capital. I'd like to give a special shout out to my family who made the trip to witness my induction, including John and Virginia Ann Cruz, Johnny and Patty Aguon, Daniel and Xena Cruz, CW5 (ret.) Francis and Margaret Pablo. I've also learned a great deal about how to apply critical thinking to AG operations from awesome leaders like CW4 (ret.) Rick Samson, MG (ret.) Roderick Leon Guerrero, CW5 (ret.) Michael Demers, CW5 (ret.) Troy Skaggs, CW5 Lou Burge, Col. John Javellana, and a host of talented peers and subordinates—too many to mention. My faith and trust in God continue to keep me through good and bad seasons—evidence that an ordinary person like me can do extraordinary things in Him. Finally, thanks to my Dad, Larry Aguon, who passed away a few years ago. He instilled a work-hard ethic in me that has contributed to success in all areas of my life. If there was a dedication to this honor, it would be bestowed to him. Love you Dad! ***(Guam National Guard Public Affairs)***

COURTESY PHOTO

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bernard Aguon displays the Guam Flag at the National Adjutant General Ball in Columbia, South Carolina, last June 15, 2023.

AG HALL OF FAME CITATION

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bernard Aguon of the Guam National Guard is honored by the U.S. Army Adjutant General School during a Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Aguon's citation reads:

CW4 Bernard Aguon was a key member of the IPPS-A R2 Team during the final testing before "Go-Live" and fielding group #1. His knowledge and experience with legacy systems provided the Developers with the information that they needed to correct a large number of system defects that could have further delayed the fielding of IPPS-A. After the release of IPPS-A R2, CW4 Aguon was the ARNG CRM sustainment manager. He worked tirelessly with FMD and CACI to improve how help tickets are managed at the Tier I, II, & III levels. He also was the originator of the Tier 0 concept that allowed State level CRM Managers to review cases before they were elevated to Tier II or III. While working with the Tier II and III teams he was able to help the development of tools that would allow case agents to have expanded roles to correct HR issues that resulted in Tier III agents to focus on system defects. The changes and improvements that CW4 Aguon worked on for the IPPS-A CRM teams will have a lasting effect on the quality of service that Soldiers receive when there are difficulties in IPPS-A.

JOB OPENING

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER (Chinese Speaking)
EUCON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Job Duties:
Provides instruction at the Secondary School level in the following classes: Fundamental Math, Algebra I and Geometry; creates lesson plans; evaluates student performance and provides feedback; communicates students' progress to parents; develops and updates curriculum for the classroom; maintains accurate records of students' progress; keeps order in the classroom; posts grades and sends grade reports to parents; performs other teaching-related duties.

Other requirements:
Baccalaureate degree in liberal arts, stem-science, or engineering; ability to communicate and interact with students and parents; ability to encourage and motivate students; basic computer and Microsoft software skills; Chinese language skills preferred, as school instructs both native English and Chinese speaking students

Work Location: Eucon International School, Kulales Place, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Gualo Rai

Mail Address: P.O. Box 500087, Saipan, MP 98950

E-Mail address: hr@eucon.edu

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB23-DPL/
TIN-42300082-CIF TINIAN

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 11, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS 'E' VEHICLE FOR TINIAN DISTRICT OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT BLDG NO. 12552, ANATAHAN DRIVE, CAPTIOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO THE DEPARMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS, MRS. TERESITA A. SANTOS VIA EMAIL AT dpl@dpl.gov.mp

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ TERESITA A. SANTOS
SECRETARY, DPL

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

AMENDED
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2023

Opening date: July 03, 2023 Closing date: July 21, 2023

Location:	**SAIPAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Airport Manager	UNGRADED
	(1) ARFF Mechanic II	PL 6/1 to 6/12 ($9.27/hr to $15.85/hr)
	(1) Grants Specialist	PL 15/1 to 15/12 ($14.38/hr to $24.60/hr)
	(1) Master Electrician	PL 19/1 to 19/12 ($17.48/hr to $29.90/hr)
	(1) Procurement Clerk	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr to $13.04/hr)
Location:	**TINIAN**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(2) Ports Police/ARFF Trainee	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr)
Location:	**ROTA**	**SALARY**
Position(s):	(1) Custodial/Maintenance-I	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr to $13.04/hr)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than ***5:00 P.M. on Friday, July 21, 2023.***

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

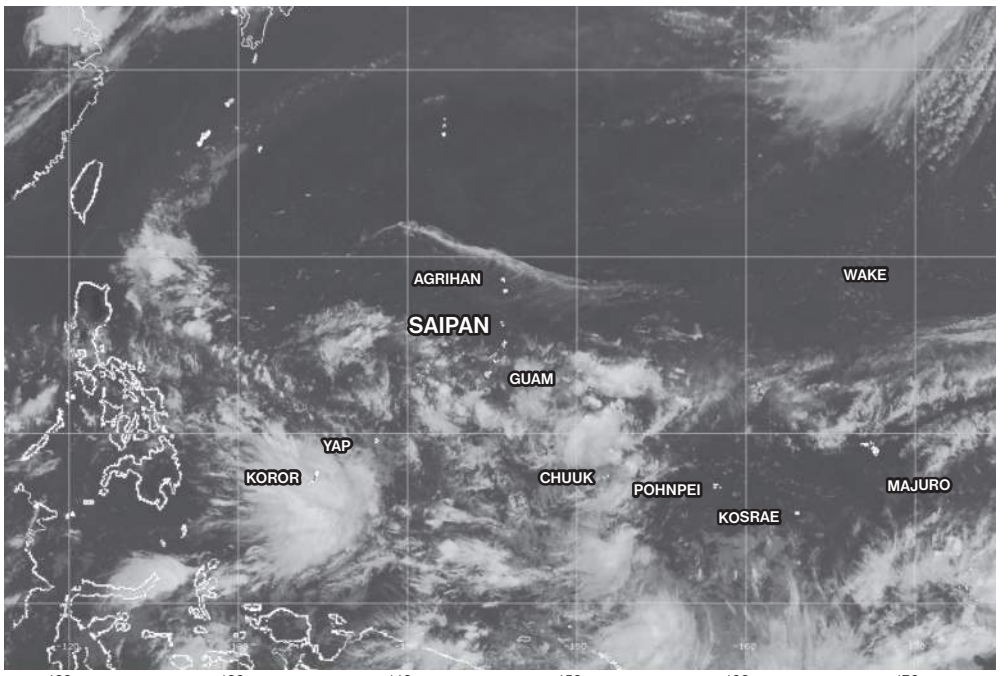
CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Some of the storms could produce heavy rainfall.	Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny	A 40 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Mostly sunny
86° 78°	86° 76°	86° 76°	86° 76°	86° 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar showing mostly cloudy skies and scattered to numerous showers. Ipan buoy and latest altimetry date indicating combined seas 5 to 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 76°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Wednesday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Thursday	5:53 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:54 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:54 AM	6:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:26 AM	1:13 PM	-
Wednesday	1:06 AM	2:07 PM	-
Thursday	1:48 AM	3:02 PM	-
Friday	2:33 AM	3:58 PM	-
Saturday	3:22 AM	4:53 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	59° / 50°
Beijing	Thunderstorms	96° / 75°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86° / 76°
London	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°
Los Angeles	Sunny	84° / 66°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	55° / 46°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	87° / 80°
New York	Thunderstorms	88° / 75°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	88° / 77°
Paris	Showers	72° / 55°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	86° / 75°
Rome	Sunny	93° / 72°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	92° / 74°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	63° / 54°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	90° / 73°
Tokyo	Showers	84° / 75°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	96° / 79°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:56 AM	High Tide	2.16
9:05 AM	Low Tide	0.57
3:15 PM	High Tide	1.62
8:26 PM	Low Tide	1.07

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174 via Guam	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 136

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The stupid sons of rich men: Colleges must end the unfair practice of legacy admissions

Thursday, after the U.S. Supreme Court knocked down affirmative action in higher education admissions in a case against Harvard University, President Joe Biden took aim at the old boys network of giving a boost to the kids of alumni, saying "Today, I'm directing the Department of Education to analyze what practices help build a more inclusive and diverse student bodies and what practices hold that back, practices like legacy admissions and other systems that expand privilege instead of opportunity."

Four days later, on Monday, advocates in Boston filed a complaint with the feds that Harvard's system of legacy admission advantage for Junior violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Our headline, "the stupid sons of rich men," comes from Charles Eliot, the president of Harvard for 40 years, until 1909. He wanted to open the university's door to scholars with brains, be they Jews, women or Blacks and not just rely on the gene pool of alums.

Legacy admissions demean students it purports to help and perpetuates a parent to children inheritance that excludes talented strivers trying to get in.

A few top colleges have banned legacy admissions namely, Johns Hopkins and Amherst. With the end of affirmative action and legacies the next target, schools shouldn't wait until they are forced to end it.

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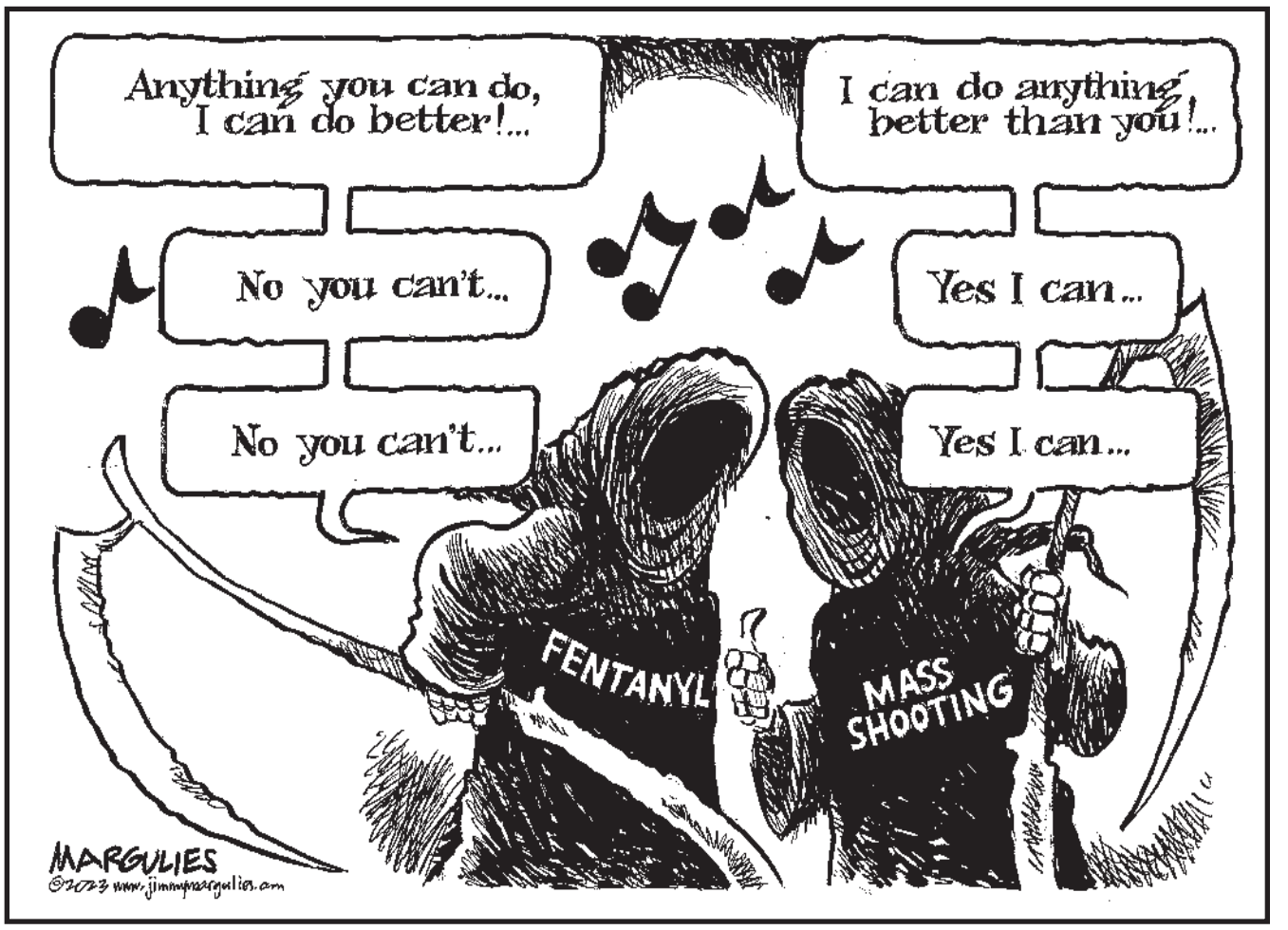

Alzheimer's drug gets FDA nod, but hurdles remain

By LISA JARVIS
Bloomberg Opinion

Lisa Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Previously, she was executive editor of* Chemical & Engineering News.

Eisai Co. and Biogen Inc.'s Alzhiemer's drug Leqembi has been granted full approval by the Food and Drug Administration, making it the first disease-slowing drug to secure that full blessing.

In theory, the move should significantly expand Leqembi's availability to patients eagerly awaiting new and better options to alter the course of that mind-robbing disease. In practice, the rollout is likely to take longer than patients and their families would like.

Peter Ljubenkov, a neurologist at the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, is excited to finally be able to offer his patients Leqembi, but stresses that "this drug requires a lot of expertise to give and a lot of infrastructure to give." He has been part of the months-long effort to prepare the University of California hospital network for Leqembi's arrival, a work in progress at memory centers around the country.

Leqembi received a conditional approval from the FDA in January. But its use was severely limited because the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said it would not pay for the drug, which carries an annual list price of $26,500, until it had received full approval based on evidence that it could slow down the course of the disease.

With last week's announcement, Leqembi has cleared that hurdle. But many pieces still have to fall into place before most patients will be able to receive it, says Amanda Smith, director of clinical research at the University of South Florida's Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute.

The first challenge is identifying the right patients. To be eligible, people need to be in the early stages of the disease and have confirmation they have Alzheimer's and not another form of dementia. That requires objective evidence that their brains are coated with clumps of protein called amyloid, which the drug clears away. That requires either a special PET scan that detects amyloid or a lumbar puncture to analyze cerebral spinal fluid.

But there's a catch: Amyloid PET scans, the less invasive detection method, are not covered by Medicare. The health agency's longstanding argument against coverage has been that the test, which can cost $3,000 or more, isn't necessary for treatment. Leqembi's approval undermines that argument. CMS should promptly agree to pay for these scans.

And there's another hurdle. Even if a patient's disease is confirmed by tests, neurologists will need to have a nuanced discussion with the patient about the risks of Leqembi. People taking blood thinners, for example, or those with two copies of a gene called ApoE4, are are at a higher risk of experiencing more serious brain bleeding and swelling — a side effect the FDA underscored by adding a black box warning to the drug's label.

Even without those risk factors, patients will need an MRI to confirm they don't have signs of brain bleeding before treatment begins, and then several more scans during treatment to monitor for swelling or bleeds.

Finally, there's one more obstacle: Medicare's requirements for coverage of the drug. CMS will only pay for Leqembi (and any similar drugs that receive approval) if data is collected on the drug's efficacy and safety in the real world, rather than in the highly regimented setting of a clinical trial. To capture that information, physicians will have to register patients in a yet-to-be determined registry. Without knowing how onerous that registry will be, it is "probably the next rate-limiting step toward getting people this drug in an equitable way," Ljubenkov says.

All of this could be even more difficult to manage if lots of patients wants the drug. "In theory, as soon as that FDA approval comes out, we may see an influx of patients that are unlike the typical patients that go to memory clinics," Ljubenkov says. Usually, people come to a clinic late in their disease, but now that there's a treatment available for mild disease, patients just starting to experience symptoms may be more motivated to get a diagnosis, he says.

Access isn't the only challenge facing the drug. Some physicians might prescribe it too readily. "My biggest fear is that the community doctors might just prescribe it without really understanding the implications of it — and prescribe it for people who it is really not appropriate for," Smith says. She's already seen how this can go when she inherited patients from a physician who had overprescribed Aduhelm, an earlier Alzheimer's drug whose conditional approval severely limited its use. "Fully half of them were people I never would have started on it in the first place because they were already too advanced," she says.

But the FDA's decision is an important first step. Leqembi's approval puts us on the path to figuring out a better system for caring for patients as the next drugs come along. Let's hope it's just a bumpy beginning to a new era in Alzheimer's treatment.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Give Americans the gun restrictions they want

By FRANCIS WILKINSON
Bloomberg Opinion

Francis Wilkinson is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering U.S. politics and policy. Previously, he was an editor for the* Week, *a writer for* Rolling Stone, *a communications consultant and a political media strategist.*

In the wake of another spate of mass shootings, including in Philadelphia on July 3, in which the alleged shooter fired randomly at human targets on a city street, perhaps it's time to consider new ideas.

Here's one: California Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed an amendment to the US Constitution to enshrine several popular restrictions on gun purchases. The proposal is practically futile and politically unworkable. It's also a good idea.

Interestingly, given the fantastical odds of gaining support for his amendment from the 38 states necessary to adopt it, Newsom's goals are exceedingly modest. The proposed amendment would raise the federal minimum age to purchase a firearm to 21 from 18; require universal background checks; institute a "reasonable" waiting period for all gun purchases; and ban the purchase of the semi-automatic rifles, such as the AR-15, commonly called assault weapons.

Gun violence, which is the leading cause of death of American children and teens, is widely recognized as a crisis in the US, which has levels of gun violence, including mass shootings, unknown in peer nations. But gun law is also in crisis.

As the Republican coalition has grown more aggressively counter-majoritarian, the party has abandoned consensus positions on controversial issues and increasingly adopted the agendas of its most extreme factions on abortion, LGBTQ rights, environmental protection, conservative Christian primacy, public schooling and other issues. Nowhere is this more evident than on gun policy.

In the 21st century, Republican state legislators have routinely eliminated the most rudimentary restrictions on gun purchases and possession, which are intended to make it harder for dangerous men to inflict harm. Meanwhile, the Republican bloc on the US Supreme Court has reengineered constitutional law to reflect the vision of the GOP's extremist gun wing.

In 2008 – more than two centuries after the constitution was ratified – the court created for the first time an individual right to bear arms. In his ruling, Justice Antonin Scalia waded through the contradictory flotsam of American history, collecting random stuff that sounded good while ignoring the rest. Conservative Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III (no relation) lamented that the majority's shaky 5-4 ruling was an example of legislating from the bench and would encourage others to "seek to press their political agenda in the courts."

Yet many gun-safety advocates, devoted to incremental progress on a highly polarized issue, tried to accommodate themselves to the ruling, proclaiming that Scalia's muddled decision in District of Columbia v Heller would nevertheless allow for "commonsense gun laws." If nothing else, states run by Democrats, such as California, would still be able to adopt more stringent regulations and reap the benefits of relatively lower gun-violence rates.

The Supreme Court's newly Trumpified majority has dashed such hopes. In theory, three judges appointed by a twice-impeached and subsequently twice-indicted—so far— executive who was elected with a minority of the popular vote might have cause to temper their ambitions. Modesty, however, is not a Trumpist value. The GOP bloc might as well be a board meeting of the National Rifle Association.

In his 2022 ruling in New York State Rifle & Pistol Association Inc. v Bruen, Justice Clarence Thomas marshalled his GOP peers to extend Scalia's Heller decision outside the home, rescinding restrictions on gun carrying in even the most densely populated areas of New York City.

As Stanford University Law School professor and gun violence researcher John Donohue said, "In turning these states into 'right-to-carry' states that essentially give anyone (other than a narrow class of prohibited possessors) the right to carry handguns outside the home, the Court determined that its judgment about gun policy trumped the legislative determinations based on strong empirical evidence that promiscuous gun carrying will elevate violent crime."

In its next term, the GOP bloc will decide whether to eliminate a "narrow class of prohibited possessors" by permitting domestic abusers – arguably the most dangerous people in the nation when armed – to possess firearms no matter how violent their personal history. If the Republican bloc hews to the history standard that it established in Heller and Bruen, it's hard to see how we won't soon have a constitutional right for wife beaters and girlfriend stalkers to wield semi-automatic tools of intimidation and violence. (There were no laws against domestic abusers possessing firearms in the 1780s or the 1860s, the two eras that the court has decided should dominate the US in perpetuity.)

With a handful of rightwing judges making gun laws for California's 39 million residents, essentially enshrining Mississippi and Arkansas as the national gold standard, Newsom is both highlighting the policy insanity and beginning the long process of building support to overthrow minority rule.

His proposed amendment is so modest that it would hardly revolutionize gun policy even if it were adopted. The modesty, of course, is the point. If the Supreme Court prohibits even minimal, logical and mostly popular gun-safety provisions, then the preservation of both national sanity and human life requires a more aggressive approach to an institution that has gone dangerously awry. Newsom's constitutional amendment is surely a dead end. But it's also a welcome bid to reclaim government of, by and for the people.

Should the TSA end the 3-ounce liquid restriction?

By SHELDON H. JACOBSON
Chicago Tribune

Sheldon H. Jacobson is a professor of computer science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The plot to bring liquid explosives onto flights from London to the U.S. and Canada in 2006 prompted the Transportation Security Administration to institute a limitation of 3 ounces on all liquid and gel containers placed in carry-on bags.

This led to the now well-known and much maligned 3-1-1 rule for carry-on bags: 3-ounce containers inserted into a 1-quart bag for each passenger. The 3-1-1 rule has endured for 17 years. Since that time, airport security has moved forward strategically and technologically. The most significant strategic change has been the introduction of PreCheck in 2011, the risk-based system that makes travelers better known to the TSA, giving them access to expedited screening lanes at airport security checkpoints.

Currently, the TSA is deploying computed tomography (CT) screening devices for carry-on bags, which provide a more precise, 3D view of bags' contents.

Given such enhancements and improvements, is the 3-1-1 rule still needed?

The United Kingdom decided that it is not and is taking steps to gradually phase out the rule. London City Airport is the first in the U.K. to abandon the rule and is using CT screening devices to scan carry-on bags, which can screen liquid containers of up to 2 liters or around a half gallon with greater precision. Liquid explosives have a different density than water, which the CT screening devices can detect.

To date, the U.K. government has said that where CT screening devices have been in place, there have been no security incidents. That is a nonsensical way to measure success.

If any terrorist groups want to get liquid explosives through an airport checkpoint, they are best served by waiting until more U.K. airports participate and more countries follow suit in permitting larger liquid containers in carry-on bags. A large-scale attack could be orchestrated with the hope of some liquid explosives getting through security, which would cause widespread chaos and damage.

Progress in airport security is necessary, and what was needed 10 or 20 years ago may no longer be required to maintain the security of the air system.

The good news is that almost all travelers pose no risk to the air system. Terrorist threats are akin to needles in haystacks. The likelihood of any security breach in the short term due to the policy change is extremely small.

The one blemish related to the U.K. decision is that not all passengers are the same from a security standpoint. Most are indeed benign. Some would even argue, correctly, that on any given day, all travelers are benign. Yet policies must be instituted to not only manage most days, but also outlier days. The CT screening devices provide an enhanced layer to lower risk and provide the necessary protection.

However, CT screening devices are not without limitations. They are subject to false alarms, which can slow the flow at security checkpoints, and false clears, which can lead to a security breach if it occurs with the wrong passenger. In the U.S., travelers going through screening lines have experienced slowdowns as TSA officers get acclimated to the new CT devices, even with the 3-1-1 policy still in place.

The U.K. is not proceeding blindly. It is also aggressively pushing for biometric facial recognition as a means to confirm travelers' identities. Hence, if travelers are known to their security administration, then item restrictions, such as limitations on liquids and gels, could be relaxed.

Implementing a similar policy change at U.S. airports would require that more passengers be known to the TSA. This could be achieved in two ways.

One is by offering PreCheck at no cost to any traveler willing to undergo the necessary background check. The other way is to expand the use of biometric identity verification such as facial recognition, which would achieve a similar risk reduction benefit.

Such passengers should be permitted to abandon 3-1-1 bags. The passengers who remain unknown to the TSA would still be required to abide by the rule.

Some may argue that a known traveler to the TSA could still bring a liquid explosive through a security checkpoint and cause harm. This highlights why the rigor of the vetting process to become a known traveler or using biometric information should be key to relaxing the 3-1-1 rule, since the risks associated with such people are extremely low. The additional layer of security that CT screening devices provide would decrease any remaining risk.

So will the TSA follow the U.K.'s lead?

In the short term, no. However, the lesson learned is that responses to past threats need to be periodically revisited.

Getting past the 3-1-1 rule will require more passengers to become known to the TSA. The most significant headwind to achieving this using facial recognition is privacy concerns, which at least five senators have spotlighted, hoping to pause its expansion. If these senators are successful, the likelihood that the 3-1-1 rule will be abandoned for all passengers is small.

What the U.K. policy change is doing is pushing other countries to reexamine their liquid policy. The question is not whether a new policy is needed, but when and for whom a new policy should be instituted.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

WELLNESS MISSION 2023

SAIPAN, TINIAN, ROTA

The Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, under the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Department of Defense, 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) and various CNMI Community Partners are pleased to share information on the CNMI Operation Wellness Mission this July 2023.

NO COST TO THE COMMUNITY AND NO INSURANCE REQUIRED

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BASIS

MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL OFFER:

- Healthcare Exam Services
- Optometry Services
- Dentistry Services
- Veterinary Care
- Behavioral & General Health Education

Behavioral & General Health Education

Saipan: July 12-19th, 8AM-5PM; July 20th, 8AM-12PM
- Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Medical Care and Treatment Site (MCATS)

Tinian: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Tinian Junior - Senior High School

Rota: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior - Senior High School

ESTIMATED DAILY THROUGHPUT:
Saipan – 32-48 Rota- 16-24
Tinian- 16-24

SERVICES OFFERED:
Mental Health Education & Counseling in:
Tobacco Cessation, Coping Skills, Sleeping Problems, Relationship Problems
Substance Abuse Assessments

SERVICES NOT OFFERED:
Psychotherapy, Medication Management

Veterinary Care

Saipan: July 12-19th, 8AM-5PM; July 20th, 8AM-12PM
- Saipan Mayor's Office Dog Shelter
- Saipan Cares for Animals

Tinian: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Tinian Dog Control Office

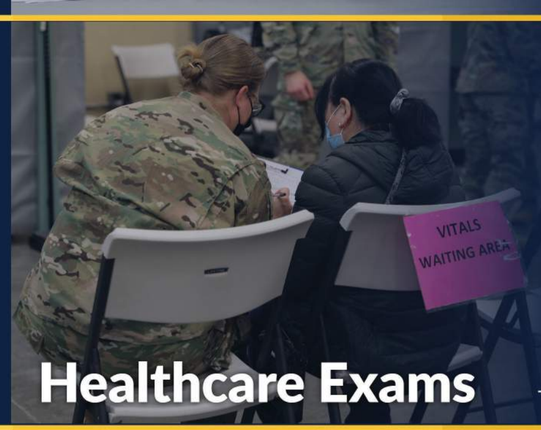
Rota: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior - Senior High School

1 Animal Per Household

ESTIMATED DAILY THROUGHPUT:
Saipan – SCA: 12-15
Mayor's Shelter: 6-8
Tinian - 6-8
Rota - 6-8

SERVICES OFFERED:
Spay/ Neutering
Examinations
Fecals

SERVICES NOT OFFERED:
Euthanasia



Healthcare Exams

Saipan: July 12-19th, 8AM-5PM; July 20th, 8AM-12PM
- Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Medical Care and Treatment Site (MCATS)

Tinian: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Tinian Junior - Senior High School

Rota: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior - Senior High School

ESTIMATED DAILY THROUGHPUT:
Saipan – 150 Rota- 50
Tinian- 50

SERVICES OFFERED:
School-Aged Physicals
Wellness Exams
Consultation on diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, hypertension, and gout.

SERVICES NOT OFFERED:
No Labs / Bloodwork
Prescription Refills

Dental Services

Saipan: July 12th,12PM-5PM; July 13-19th, 8AM-5PM; July 20th, 8AM-12PM
- Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Medical Care and Treatment Site (MCATS)

Tinian: July 12th, 12PM-5PM; July 13-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Tinian Junior - Senior High School

Rota: July 12th, 12PM-5PM; July 13-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior - Senior High School

ESTIMATED DAILY THROUGHPUT:
Saipan – 25- 50
Tinian- 10-20
Rota- 10-20

SERVICES OFFERED:
Exams
Cleanings
Fillings
Extractions
X-rays

Optometry Services

Saipan: July 12-19th, 8AM-5PM; July 20th, 8AM-12PM
- Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) Medical Care and Treatment Site (MCATS)

Tinian: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Tinian Junior - Senior High School

Rota: July 12-18th, 8AM-5PM; July 19th, 8AM-12PM
- Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Junior - Senior High School

ESTIMATED DAILY THROUGHPUT:
Saipan – 100-150
Rota –80-100
Tinian – 80-100

SERVICES OFFERED:
Vision Screening
Eye Exam
Prescription Glasses Fabrication

SERVICES NOT OFFERED:
Treatment for Glaucoma, Macular Degeneration, Cataracts, Eye Injury and/or Surgery.

For more information, contact the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs Office at (670) 483-1812, (670) 785-0341, or (670) 483-1814

Business

TO TECH EXPORTS CURBS ON CHINA

Yellen: US might 'respond to unintended consequences'

AP
Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen arrives for a news conference at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, Sunday, July 9, 2023.

BEIJING (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Sunday said she agreed Washington will listen to Chinese complaints about security-related curbs on U.S. technology exports and might "respond to unintended consequences" as she ended a visit to Beijing aimed at reviving strained relations.

Yellen defended "targeted measures" on trade that China's leaders complain are aimed at hurting its fledgling tech industries. She said the Biden administration wants to "avoid unnecessary repercussions" but gave no indication of possible changes.

Relations between the two biggest economies are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes about technology, security and other irritants. A key Chinese complaint is limits on access to processor chips and other U.S. technology on security grounds that threaten to hamper the ruling Communist Party's development of smartphones, artificial intelligence and other industries.

"We will open up channels so that they can express concerns about our actions, and we can explain and possibly in some situations respond to unintended consequences of our actions," Yellen said at a news conference.

Yellen talked with China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, and other officials during 10 hours of meetings. She had a five-hour session Saturday with her Chinese counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng. Treasury officials said in advance there were no plans for her to meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Yellen received a warm welcome and prominent coverage by the state press, but Chinese officials gave no sign they would change industrial or other policies that Washington and other governments say violate Beijing's free-trade commitments. On Saturday, He said Washington should "adopt a rational and pragmatic attitude" to improve relations.

On Sunday, Yellen announced no agreements on major disputes or plans for future activity but said her department and Chinese officials would have "more frequent and regular" communication.

U.S.-Chinese political strains are adding to uncertainty that is dampening the willingness of consumers and businesses to spend and invest.

China's economic growth rebounded to 4.5% in the first quarter of 2023 from last year's 3% after anti-virus controls on travel and business activity were lifted in December. But factory activity and consumer spending decelerated in the quarter ending in June.

Xi accused Washington in March of trying to hold back China's industrial development.

Beijing has been slow to retaliate for U.S. technology restrictions, possibly to avoid disrupting its own industries. But three days before Yellen's arrival, the government announced unspecified controls on exports of gallium and germanium, metals used in making semiconductors and solar panels. China is the biggest producer of both.

Yellen said she tried to reassure officials Washington doesn't want to decouple or separate its economy from China, while it tries to "de-risk" trade.

The Biden administration is pressing semiconductor makers to move production to the United States to reduce reliance on Taiwan and other Asian suppliers, which is seen as a security risk. Washington wants to develop alternatives to Chinese supplies of rare earth elements, metals used in smartphones, wind turbines and other products.

"They have expressed some concern that de-risking amounts to decoupling," Yellen said. She said she tried to "assure my Chinese counterparts that this is by no means the same thing."

"The de-risking involves attention to clearly articulated and narrowly targeted national security concerns, as well as broader concern with diversifying our supply chains, which the United States is doing in a few important sectors," she said.

Throughout her visit, Yellen appealed for "healthy economic competition," a reference to complaints Beijing violates its free-trade commitments by subsidizing and shielding politically favored industries from private and foreign competition.

Yellen said she had expressed concern to Chinese officials about "coercive activities" against U.S. companies.

That follows raids on consulting firms and the detention of staff members without explanation and what the U.S. government says is arbitrary detention or prohibitions on people leaving China that some complain are used to pressure them in business disputes.

Chinese leaders are trying to revive investor interest, but foreign companies are uneasy about their status after Xi and other officials called for economic self-reliance. The ruling party has also expanded an anti-spying law that has fueled uncertainty about what law firms or consultants can do.

On Saturday, Yellen appealed to He for cooperation on climate change, the debt burdens of developing countries and other global challenges. She said their governments shouldn't let disagreements about trade and security derail economic and financial relations.

Mexican military to take over country's airports

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's armed forces are taking control of the capital's main airport, and the government plans to give the military control of nearly a dozen more across the country as the president takes aim at corruption and mismanagement.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has been setting the armed forces to a wide range of nontraditional tasks since he was elected in 2018, creating concerns about the separation of the military from civilian life.

A new airport was built by the army outside Mexico City a year ago at a cost of $4.1 billion. It is run by the military but little used. López Obrador says the old airport, the country's busiest, will be run by the navy.

The navy took charge of security at Mexico City International Airport, or Benito Juárez, more than a year ago. It will soon have control of everything else, from customs and immigration to handling luggage and cleaning bathrooms, with the imminent publication of a presidential order to make that official.

The list of problems at Mexico City Airport has long included major drug shipments and illegal migration. Infrastructure was in disrepair, and a number of close calls were reported on the runways in recent years as the airport increasingly had trouble handling flights.

The airport also had a reputation for stolen luggage, mismanaged airline schedules, business without contracts and corruption.

Meanwhile, López Obrador has gone to the armed forces for help throughout his term, giving them some immigration duties and control of ports and customs. They are also building major infrastructure projects such as a tourist train through the Yucatan Peninsula and a new airport in the same area. They even run plant nurseries and tourist trips to a former penal colony.

The airport, which is used by some 4 million travelers each month, will be "a company within a naval military entity," Rear Adm. Carlos Velázquez Tiscareño, the airport's 73-year-old director, said in a recent interview. But, he said, "this is not going to look like a military department."

Unlike the capital's other airport, Felipe Angeles, where National Guard troops take passenger tickets at the gate, at Benito Juarez the only uniformed military are the 1,500 marines deployed since February 2022 for security. The rest of the airport personnel will be civilians but "with clearer rules ... that govern with more order and discipline," Velázquez Tiscareño said.

UN keeps pushing for extension of food, fertilizer exports from Russia, Ukraine

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Top U.N. officials vowed Friday to keep working for an extension of the deal that allows food and fertilizer exports from Russia and Ukraine despite their war, pushing back at Moscow's pessimism about a renewal before the July 17 expiration.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged both countries to make global food security a priority and "help ensure that these products can reach global markets smoothly, efficiently and at scale," U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said. "Together, the agreements are contributing to sustained reductions in global food prices, which are now more than 23% below the record highs reached in March last year."

Turkey and the U.N. brokered a breakthrough accord with the warring sides last July, which has enabled Ukraine to ship over 32 million tons of grain from Black Sea ports to global markets.

Moscow, however, complains that the separate U.N.-Russia memorandum on facilitating shipments of Russian food and fertilizer still faces serious obstacles.

U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said Friday that the United Nations has heard repeated statements from Russia "saying that there's been no advantage to them and time's up." But as the secretary-general made clear, "this doesn't deter us from doing everything we can to work for a deal," he said.

On Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, "Unfortunately, at the moment there are no particular grounds for extending the deal." But he also said that "there is still time for the West to fulfill those parts of the deal that concern Russia."

Griffiths said U.N. trade chief Rebeca Grynspan, who has been in charge of the Russian side of the deal, "is very keen" to sit down with officials in Moscow next week. Griffitsh hopes to meet with the parties to the Black Sea Grain Initiative — Ukraine, Russia and Turkey — in Istanbul "if that's possible next week."

Ukraine and Russia are both major global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food products that developing nations depend on. Russia is also a major supplier of ammonia, a key ingredient of fertilizer.

Russia has faced difficulties in arranging shipping, insurance and banking transactions because of sanctions imposed by the United States and European Union after its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Nation

Stymied by Supreme Court, Biden wants voters to have final say on agenda

WASHINGTON (AP)—After major blows to his agenda by the Supreme Court, President Joe Biden is intent on making sure voters will have the final say.

When the court's conservative majority effectively killed his plan to cancel or reduce federal student loan debts for millions of people, Biden said, "Republicans snatched away the hope that they were given." When the justices ended race-based affirmative action in college admissions, he said, "This is not a normal court." When they overturned Roe v. Wade and a national right to abortion last year, the president said, "Voters need to make their voices heard."

As Biden heads into the 2024 election, he is running not only against the Republicans who control one-half of Congress but also against the conservative bloc that dominates the nation's highest court. It's a subtle but significant shift in approach toward the Supreme Court, treating it more like a political entity even as Biden stops short of calling for an overhaul.

That shift is becoming apparent in everything from the White House's messaging to its legal strategy.

"The president respects the court's authority, but if its judgments are going to be political and there are members of the court who are saying that, he owes it to voters to make it clear what his positions are and what he's doing to address it," said Ron Klain, his former chief of staff.

"Many members of the current court testified that Roe is settled law and still overturned it," he added, referring to the court's ruling on abortion. "That has its consequences."

Biden, who once led the Senate Judiciary Committee, is focusing on the politicization of the court as a way to encourage voters to back him. Yet he has not embraced any effort to make big changes to the court.

AP

President Joe Biden speaks on the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in college admissions in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Thursday, June 29, 2023, in Washington.

Instead, Biden is increasingly vocal about his belief that the court is abandoning mainstream constitutional interpretation. He tells voters they need more Democrats in Congress and a Democrat in the White House to counter the impact of the conservative-leaning court.

Biden has won his share of cases, including on immigration, before a court where conservatives hold a 6-3 majority. But the student loan defeat capped a term when justices imposed significant roadblocks.

White House officials say Biden is keen to explore other ways to pursue the same priorities and explain to the American people about the obstacles.

"There's only upside in running against the court as an institution because the court is doing things that are wildly unpopular and they're preventing the president from implementing his agenda," said Chris Kang, chief counsel of the progressive group Demand Justice and a onetime deputy counsel to President Barack Obama.

"I think that it's important to make clear that the Supreme Court is making it impossible to implement and advance policies that should not have any controversy attached to them," he added.

Republicans are working to portray Biden as overstepping his legal authority in pursuit of his agenda. They say the high court's policies are in step with much of the country and they are trying to motivate their own voters by highlighting what the GOP has achieved through court rulings.

Former President Donald Trump, at the recent Faith and Freedom Coalition conference in Washington, praised the three justices he had nominated to the Supreme Court. "Exactly one year ago today, those justices were the pivotal votes in the Supreme Court's landmark decision ending the constitutional atrocity known as Roe v. Wade," Trump said.

He drew a standing ovation by noting that "conservatives had been trying for 50 years," to overturn that ruling. "But I got it done and nobody ever thought it was a possibility."

Trump, DeSantis eye Super Tuesday states as they prepare for 2024 long game

By SARA BURNETT
Associated Press

As the Republican presidential primary intensifies this summer, most White House hopefuls are devoting their time to events in Iowa and New Hampshire, the states that kick off the nomination process early next year. Not Ron DeSantis or Donald Trump.

The Florida governor will address more than 1,500 faithful Republicans on Saturday at Nashville's Music City Center. A few weeks later, the former president will swing through Alabama to headline the state GOP's biggest event of the summer.

Trump, the early GOP frontrunner, and DeSantis, who is trailing him for second place, are hardly ignoring voters in the states that jumpstart the Republican contest. Over the past month, they've both held rallies and other major events in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, sometimes even appearing in the same state on the same day.

But they are doing more than the other GOP candidates to strengthen their position in states like Tennessee and Alabama that will hold elections on so-called Super Tuesday. That's when the largest number of delegates, which candidates win state-by-state, are up for grabs of any single day in the primary cycle.

Only Trump and DeSantis, who have raised tens of millions of dollars to support their campaigns, have the resources to work in any meaningful way beyond the early states. And GOP leaders beyond Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina say it's a smart strategy.

"I know everybody's focused on Iowa and New Hampshire," said Scott Golden, chairman of the Tennessee GOP, who noted that early voting in his state begins in mid-February, before South Carolina is scheduled to hold its contest. "But it is worth taking a little time out to come to Tennessee."

For presidential candidates, Super Tuesday is a circled-in-red date — next year, it's March 5 — that can make or break a campaign.

Coming quickly after contests in early states such as Iowa and New Hampshire, the set of roughly 14 primaries are held across a broad geographic area, from California and Texas to Massachusetts and Maine. The day also is a test of a campaign's ability to organize supporters, its financial strength and a chance for those candidates who are still standing to run up their delegate total.

'Life threatening' flooding overwhelms NY roadways, killing 1 person

NEW YORK (AP)—Heavy rain spawned extreme flooding in New York's Hudson Valley that killed at least one person, swamped roadways and forced road closures on Sunday night, as much of the rest of the Northeast U.S. began bracing for potentially punishing rains.

As the storm moved east, the National Weather Service extended flash flood warnings into Connecticut, including the cities of Stamford and Greenwich, which could dump as much as 5 inches of rain before moving into Massachusets.

In New York's Hudson Valley, rescue teams were attempting to retrieve the body of a woman in her 30's who drowned after being swept away while trying to evacuate her home. Two other people escaped.

The force of the flash flooding dislodged boulders, which rammed the woman's house and damaged part of its wall, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus told The Associated Press.

"Her house was completely surrounded by water. The family tried to escape," he said.

"She was trying to get through (the flooding) with her dog," he added, "and she was overwhelmed by tidal-wave type waves."

The extent of the destruction from the slow moving storm, which pounded the area with more than 4 inches of rain, won't be known until after sunrise, when residents and officials can begin surveying the damage. But officials said the storm had already wrought tens of millions of dollars in damage.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul confirmed to WCBS radio that several people were missing and one home had been washed away.

The rains have hit some parts of New York harder than others, but officials said communities to the east of the state should brace for torrential rains and possible flash flooding.

Officials urged residents in the line of the storm to stay off the roads.

"The amount of water is extraordinary and it's still a very dangerous situation," Hochul said.

"We'll get through this," she said, but added that "it's going to be a rough night."

The governor declared a state of emergency Sunday for Orange County, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) north of New York City, where about 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain poured down. She later extended the state of emergency to Ontario County in western New York, southeast of Rochester.

"We are in close communication with local officials and state agencies are participating in search and rescue efforts," she said.

Overdrive

Driving the cheapest new car in America: the 2023 Nissan Versa sedan

By LARRY PRINTZ
Tribune News Service

America has become a nation of truck drivers, enamored with the thought of driving a 2-ton, all-wheel drive monstrosity with all the visual grace of a large appliance box.

Automakers are delighted, of course, as they've always been able to charge more for SUVs, even though it cost them little more to manufacture than cars. This has brought in the massive profits needed to develop electric vehicles, something dictated by the world's governments, not consumer desire. In the interim, truly affordable sedans have withered to a meager few, of which the 2023 Nissan Versa is the least-expensive in America, starting at $15,830. That's more than 67% less than the average new vehicle price of $48,528, according to Cox Automotive.

Offered in ascending S, SV and SR trim, opting for a ride in the cheap seats doesn't mean that you can't have a bit of automotive fast fashion. Just don't expect it to be fast. Lacking the dowdiness of its predecessor, Nissan's cheapest ride wears standard LED headlights and the brand's signature V-motion grille, floating roof, and C-pillar design cues. Sharing its fashion sense with its pricier siblings means you won't be embarrassed while parking at the Piggly Wiggly.

But whatever fashionable illusions you have fade once you climb inside, where you're greeted by a sea of hard plastic, particularly on the center console, where the driver's right leg rests. Ambience is plain, but offset by a padded instrument panel and stitching on the SV – a premium touch that attempts to elevate the cabin's ambience. It's certainly an improvement from its unfashionable antecedent. And buying the $19,820 Vera SR nets such conveniences as automatic climate control, heated front seats, intelligent key with pushbutton start, center console with armrest, power windows, power door locks and automatic headlights.

One of the Versa's virtues was once its generous back seat legroom. It now measures a miserly 31 inches, a far cry from past models developed for the Chinese market, where consumers put a premium on spacious back seats. But the Versa is sufficiently roomy up front, and the trunk holds a generous 15 cubic feet of cargo, although that's also less than before.

Mechanically, the front-wheel-drive Versa is basic – no surprise given its price tag – with front disc/rear drum brakes, an independent front suspension and a torsion beam out back. A 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine generates 122 horsepower and 114 pound-feet of torque through a five-speed manual transmission on base S models; others get a continuously variable automatic transmission. Payload is rated at 862 pounds for the S, 948 pounds for the SV, and 876 pounds for the SR.

NISSAN/TNS
The 2023 Nissan Versa perfectly plays its part as a low-end economy car.

NUTS & BOLTS

- **Base price**: $15,830
- **Engine**: 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine
- **Horsepower/Torque**: 122/114 pound-feet
- **EPA fuel economy (combined city/highway)**: 35 mpg
- **Fuel required**: Regular Unleaded (87 octane)
- **Length/Width/Height**: 177/68.5/57.7 inches
- **Cargo capacity**: 15 cubic feet

Versa S and SV models come with a 7-inch color touchscreen; you'll have to step up to the SR to get the larger 8-inch. A four-speaker AM/FM audio system is standard on S and SV trims, while a 6-speaker unit is standard on the SR. All Versas come with Bluetooth, a USB port and an auxiliary power point. But if you require Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, SiriusXM Satellite Radio and a wireless smartphone charging pad, choose the SV or SR. No matter how much you pay, you won't get a built-in navigation system, but most buyers will use their smartphones instead.

Slow off the line and reluctant to furnish more power, the Versa perfectly plays its part as a low-end economy car. When more power finally arrives, its presence is noted by the loud, wailing engine and a lethargy that makes the prospect of highway onramps terrifying. But its mission is economical transport, not thrills, although at 32 mpg, fuel economy is about what you'd expect: not great, not bad. Also, it won't surprise you that the Versa has a stiff ride, little bump absorption and more-than-expected body lean. Again, it's typical economy car performance. But it does boast surprisingly grippy tires, at least on the SR.

For those with limited means, the Versa proves to be a lifeline to owning a new car at a minimal price in an era of ever-escalating prices. But watch the bottom line. Once the price reaches $22,000, opt for the larger, better-trimmed, better-performing Nissan Sentra.

Hot topic

Q: My husband and I have an ongoing dispute. Don't worry: No matter what, your answer won't precipitate a divorce! My question, which is for all the marbles: Does a car cool off more quickly if one opens the windows while waiting for the A/C to kick in, even in the heat of the summer? I say that any breeze or air flow is better than no air flow. (However, I guess there is a little air flow from the vents before the A/C kicks in, but it doesn't seem to cool the car down as quickly as fresh air.) Or, as my husband avers, is it better for me to melt onto the leather seats for the five minutes before the A/C kicks in because opening the windows and letting in the hot outside air will just make the A/C less efficient? Again, the happiness of our marriage is not resting upon your answer but, well, I'm obviously right, right?

C.W., Norfolk, Virginia

A: Chill. You are not obviously right, however you are partially right. Running the air conditioning draws outside air into the cabin creating positive air pressure, so opening the windows a crack allows the hot air to be replaced by cooler air. But, better yet, setting the HVAC system to recirculate, or max A/C, continuously re-cools the air that has already been cooled. While you guys are hot, it may be time to kiss and make up.

■■■

Q: My wife has a 2014 Jeep Wrangler (manual transmission) approaching 70,000 miles. She takes good care of it but just recently had some issues. She was driving on the highway and the Jeep convulsed into jerky movements. The Jeep wouldn't accelerate past 30 mph, even though she shifted into higher gear. We got it to our mechanic. He scanned the computer for codes and saw that timing readings on both banks were reading correctly. He cleared the codes, test drove it multiple times with no problems at all, and none of the codes have returned. We cannot diagnose the root cause, but the Jeep seems to be running fine. We're stumped!

B.M., Naperville, Illinois

DREAMSTIME/TNS
Running the air conditioning draws outside air into the cabin creating positive air pressure so opening the windows a crack allows the hot air to be replaced by cooler air.

A: Stumped? Hey, he fixed it, didn't he? Most people are stumped if the technician fails. They send me letters.

■■■

Q: I recently bought a 2002 Honda from a service station. They said it was in working condition and would stand behind the transmission and engine for three months. The problem seems to be that the air conditioner works when the car is moving but when we are idling, it blows hot air. I brought it back for them to service and showed them your column about the rubber tube being clogged. They said they checked it, but the car is still doing the same thing. Am I facing a bigger problem? I would like to be aware of it and take care of it.

C.O., Skokie, Illinois

A: A clogged drain hose gradually reduces the A/C efficiency, but once the evaporator coil icing condition melts, the A/C is restored. I think the problem may be a bit more complicated. The A/C condenser, which sits in front of the radiator, may be restricted from bugs and leaves or the electric fan may be malfunctioning. In either case, air from driving down the road could be sufficient to cool both the condenser and radiator adequately. Not so when you stop. But I can't rule out a bigger problem.

MOTORMOUTH

BY BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide *and* Consumers Digest. *Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.*

Life & Style

‘Speak Now (Taylor’s Version)’ is here. Here’s how to reconsider it

LOS ANGELES (AP)— In 2010, newly anointed as a Grammy winner, Taylor Swift released "Speak Now," her third studio album and her first without a single songwriting collaboration.

Her 2006 self-titled debut and 2008's "Fearless" had inspired both acclaim and criticism for her bold bridges and keen lyricism—these are masterful country-pop songs, critics argued, but surely a teen idol wasn't responsible for them. Swift proved her detractors wrong on "Speak Now," an album that arrived just before her pivot from country's youngest hope to pop's freshest voice.

The album served as a close document of her nascent fame and future career ambitions, and now, 13 years on, it's back. "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)," released Friday, is the third release of the six albums Swift plans to re-record. The Taylor's Version albums, instigated by music manager Scooter Braun's sale of her early catalog, represent Swift's effort to control her own songs and how they're used—a fitting ethos for "Speak Now," a record built exclusively of her own voice.

In preparation for "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)," The Associated Press reached out to Taylor Swift scholars to discuss all the ways listeners can and should think about the release.

Adolescence to adulthood

Before "Speak Now" became "Speak Now," the working title was "Enchanted," named after the power ballad of the same name. The mythology (folklore, anyone?) behind the shift is that Swift's label president at the time, Big Machine Records CEO Scott Borchetta, told her to move on from whimsy and fairytale iconography—she was entering her 20s and this LP warranted a more mature title.

Transition creates an interesting framework for thinking about this album: Written largely between the ages of 18 and 20, released when she turned 21, "Speak Now" is a collection of songs on a precipice—of adulthood, of fame, of declaring ownership but still concerned with the subject matters that concern a young adult. There are crushes ("Superman," "Sparks Fly") and bittersweet breakups ("Back to December," "If This Was a Movie"), alike.

"You hear a youngness when you listen to these songs," says musicologist Lily Hirsch, author of "Can't Stop the Grrrls: Confronting Sexist Labels in Music from Ariana Grande to Yoko Ono." "It's all about these romantic relationships. The world hinges on all of that, which is so typical of that age. So, it is interesting hear the re-recordings bring a more mature voice to those earlier preoccupations."

Elizabeth Scala teaches a course on Taylor Swift's songbook at the University of Texas at Austin as an introduction to literary studies and research methods.

"I think 'Speak Now' is still in the vein of 'I don't have enough life experience at my ripe age of 18 to give you a fully autobiographical anything, but I'm going to use what I read and what I know from other people,'" she says of the songs' lyrical content, which still manage to "make really beautiful, coherent things out of the messiness and inaccuracy of our memories."

In conversation with her critics and celebrity

Coming a year after Kanye West interrupted her acceptance speech at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards, "Speak Now" is the moment in Swift's career where she began to use her celebrity as a mirror to her interior life.

REPUBLIC RECORDS VIA AP

This cover image released by Republic Records shows "Speak Now (Taylor’s Version)" by Taylor Swift.

"Mean," a takedown of a rock critic, becomes a banjo-led treatise on antagonism of any kind; the blues-y "Dear John" centers on a young woman's tumultuous relationship with an older man.

"Insults are everywhere in music, and men don't get the same flak for it," Hirsch says, in reference to "Dear John" and "Mean." "There's this idea that women especially are supposed to take the high road, turn the other cheek and all of that, and men can get away with the low road, and they certainly do in music. It's a kind of double standard. Women are labeled 'catty' when confronting bad behavior, like in 'Dear John.'"

A common pastime among Swift fans is to unearth the identities of her songs' subjects. But, to Scala, "the most boring way to think about Taylor Swift is in terms of her biography."

At a recent stop of her Eras Tour in Minneapolis, Swift seemed to agree, playing "Dear John" live for the first time in 11 years after delivering this introduction:

"I'm 33 years old. I don't care about anything that happened to me when I was 19 except the songs I wrote and the memories we made together. So what I'm trying to tell you is, I'm not putting this album out so you should feel the need to defend me on the internet against someone you think I might have written a song about 14 billion years ago."

Scala sees a throughline between this album and its successors, with "Dear John" as a precursor to "All Too Well" and "Mean" as prescient to "Blank Space," a song that parodies how she's been portrayed in the media.

Revisionist history

Much online chatter surrounding the re-recording of "Speak Now" has centered on "Better Than Revenge," a pop-punk song that takes aim at another woman instead of the man that wronged them both. It takes both sonic and thematic cues from Paramore's 2007 pop-rock hit "Misery Business," a similar song about the same subject. (In fact, on "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)," Paramore singer Hayley Williams lends vocals to a "vault" song, "Castles Crumbling.")

In the original chorus of "Better Than Revenge," Swift sings, "She's an actress / She's better known for the things she does on the mattress," a rare lyrical misstep in a career underscored by poetic turns of phrases (in the opener "Mine," she sings "You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter"). In her 2023 "Better Than Revenge" version, the lyric becomes "He was a moth to the flame / She was holding the matches."

"If we think about 2010, slut-shaming rhetoric certainly existed in movies and shows. She's certainly not the only one who has done this at that time," Hirsch argues, quick to point out that Swift has also been the target of sexist vitriol.

Swift's alteration of the song in her re-recording follows a lineage of other pop stars doing the same. Lizzo and Beyoncé recently changed lyrics to songs deemed offensive. Weird Al no longer performs his Michael Jackson parodies. And because Swift hasn't performed "Better Than Revenge" live for well over a decade, she hasn't needed to confront this particular song, in this particular way.

"We are willing to replace the old version with Taylor's Versions because they are exact replicas, as much as they can be," Scala argues. "If she does something different, it becomes a different song." A different song, this time, owned by Swift.

Art evolves with time

"From a literary historian's point of view, when you first hear 'Speak Now,' you could only look at her career up to that point: It meant something in her creative timeline," says Scala. "And now we have the rest of her career to compare it to, so it's hard to listen to the record the same way. You can compare it to the older recording, but its deeper and richer."

Technology has changed from 2010. So has Swift: Her voice has matured, no longer possessing the sweet self-restraint that colored her earliest releases.

Each release comes with a few "From the Vault" tracks, unreleased songs from each album's period reimagined for the current moment. They, too, give a fuller picture.

An exercise in artistic autonomy

Beyond all of the music and cultural considerations, the fact is: Taylor Swift is re-recording this album to own her work, like she is doing with so many of her records—but this is the only album in her discography that is entirely self-penned, the one celebrated for its dismissals of exploitative male characters and poetic embrace of girlhood.

In fact, it's hard not to think of "Could've, Would've, Should've" from her 2022 LP, "Midnights," where Swift sings "Give me back my girlhood, it was mine first," as a self-reflection of her "Speak Now" self. That track is a creative reclamation of the teen who wrote "Dear John" as an adult; "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)" is the literal reclamation.

"Owning these masters, she decided to take back that control," Hirsch says. "I love what it communicates: that we all have power, we don't have to just sit back and take these situations, especially when it concerns our own voice."

Couple’s relationship has changed after baby’s birth

DEAR ABBY: Ever since about my eighth month of pregnancy until now, six months postpartum, it seems like my husband is disgusted by me. He rarely initiates intimacy, doesn’t kiss or hug me and barely touches me. I am still about 30 pounds heavier than pre-pregnancy.

When I ask him about his feelings for me, he says he loves me and I’m just being crazy, but I know I’m not. It sometimes feels like I am his babysitter and housekeeper. I know he is stressed because I stopped working, but it just seems as if he’s always angry with me, and I don’t know why.

NEW MOM IN THE EAST

DEAR NEW MOM: You have described how circumstances have changed for you since the birth of your baby. What you may not be taking into account is how reality may have changed for your husband. He may be stressed because he is now the sole wage earner and is overwhelmed by his responsibilities as a new father.

Your instinct that something is different could be chalked up to that. Communication is so important between couples that it might be in your interests to suggest the two of you facilitate it with the help of a marriage and family therapist.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I’m having a tough time with people who video chat and play videos on their cellphones. It’s always at a volume you can hear from 30 feet away, and it happens when I’m dining at a bar or sitting in a restaurant, etc. It’s distracting, intrusive and really annoying. It’s as if this behavior is now acceptable, when it’s not—at least to me.

Any suggestions on confronting this behavior, or is it really my issue to deal with? If I could toss their phones into the ice machine at the bar, I would.

GROUCH IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR GROUCH: In a restaurant, if the sound of someone’s cellphone video is intrusive, ask the host to move you to a quieter table. If it happens in a bar, it may be because the more crowded the place it, the louder it becomes—so either move to a quieter area or find a quieter venue.

While I agree that many people spend more time on their cellphones than communicating directly with the people around them, you can’t change them and neither can I. So learn to tolerate it or, if it becomes too much for you, leave.

■ ■ ■

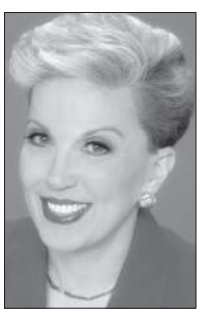
DEAR ABBY: My husband sneezes really loud and it’s kind of embarrassing. What should I do about this? I told him he should see a doctor because it happens a lot.

MARRIED TO A NOISEMAKER

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR MARRIED: People sneeze for various reasons, not all of them allergy-related. Your husband should discuss it with his doctor because the solution could be something simple. If he’s unwilling, then earplugs might be the simplest solution—for you—if you can grab them when he starts going “Aaaaa ...” before the “choo” escapes.

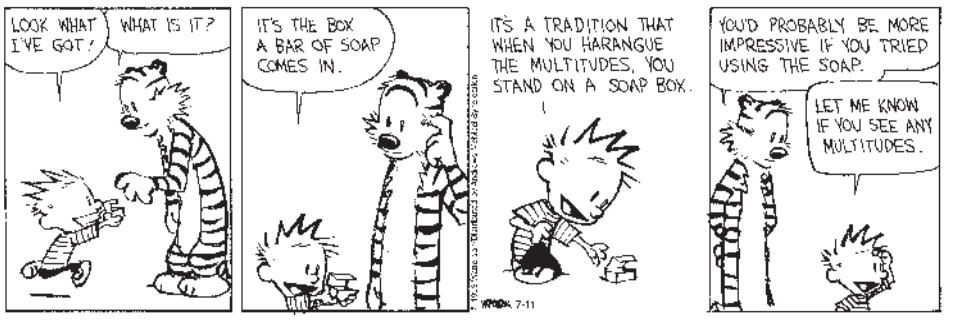
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby’s most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LOOK WHAT I'VE GOT!
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S THE BOX A BAR OF SOAP COMES IN.
IT'S A TRADITION THAT WHEN YOU HARANGUE THE MULTITUDES, YOU STAND ON A SOAP BOX.
YOU'D PROBABLY BE MORE IMPRESSIVE IF YOU TRIED USING THE SOAP.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU SEE ANY MULTITUDES.

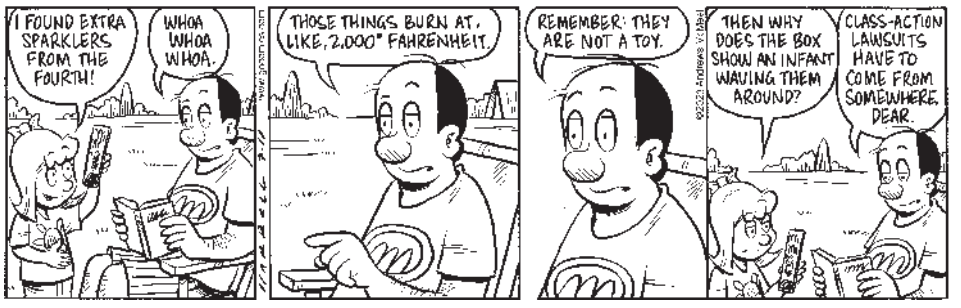
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

A WORD OF ADVICE FOR COPING WITH LIFE...
A DONUT A DAY KEEPS A BAD MOOD AWAY
AND THE BADDER THE MOOD, THE BIGGER THE DONUT
JIM DAVIS 7-11

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I FOUND EXTRA SPARKLERS FROM THE FOURTH!
WHOA WHOA WHOA.
THOSE THINGS BURN AT, LIKE, 2,000° FAHRENHEIT.
REMEMBER: THEY ARE NOT A TOY.
THEN WHY DOES THE BOX SHOW AN INFANT WAVING THEM AROUND?
CLASS-ACTION LAWSUITS HAVE TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE, DEAR.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

JUST LOOK AT THIS GUY NEXT TO US.
GET THE PHONE AWAY FROM YOUR MOUTH AND WEAR A DANG BLUETOOTH!
WE NEED TO GET YOUR EYES CHECKED. YOU JUST YELLED AT A GUY EATING A CHOCOLATE BAR.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Witty ones
5 Goat's plaint
8 "Lion King" villain
12 Perry's creator
13 Last (Abbr.)
14 "Trust Exercise" author Susan
15 Starring role
16 African evergreen tree
18 Cantina servings
20 Cuts into cubes
21 Smidgen
22 Use a ray gun
23 Taxi costs
26 Orchestral gongs
30 WWW access enabler
31 Pear-shaped fruit
32 Neither mate
33 Interferes (with)
36 Spoils, with "on"
38 TV Tarzan Ron
39 Arg. neighbor
40 Heroic tales
43 Antiviral medication
47 Home to the Buccaneers
49 Swerve
50 Layered cookie
51 Tic-tac-toe win
52 Harrow rival
53 Travel
54 Tempe sch.
55 Get lippy

DOWN
1 Raised ridge
2 Vicinity
3 Glitz partner
4 Tranquil
5 Toned down
6 "Sad to say ..."
7 S dispenser
8 Text of a film
9 Stylish
10 Top-notch
11 Disencumbers
17 Cain's dad
19 Vegas opener
22 Abrupt turn
23 In shape
24 Red — beet
25 Spinning stat
26 McCourt memoir
27 Busy insect
28 Skier Tommy
29 Fourth-yr. students
31 Saute
34 Stir-fry veggie
35 Supermodel Benitez
36 Monk's title
37 Martini garnishes
39 Marshy inlet
40 Pack cargo
41 Swiss river
42 Fed. agents
43 New Mexico resort
44 Greek cheese
45 Some August babies
46 Grecian vessels
48 Feathery neckpiece

Solution time: 22 mins.

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C	R	I	T	I	C	A	L		A	E	R	O
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D	I	G	S		S	P	Y		L	A	O	S

Yesterday's answer 7-11

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12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			17				
18				19			■	20				
■	■	■	21			■	22			■	■	■
23	24	25			■	26				27	28	29
30			■	■	31			■	■	32		
33			34	35			■	36	37			
■	■	■	38			■	39			■	■	■
40	41	42			■	43				44	45	46
47					48				49			
50				■	51				52			
53					54				55			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justin Chambers, 53; Dina Eastwood, 58; Lisa Rinna, 60; Richie Sambora, 64.

Happy Birthday: This is a year of giving and taking. Getting along with others will make your life easier and encourage you to spend more time with like-minded people. Don't fear what you don't know; open your mind to information and try something new. Loyalty, dedication and finishing what you start will pay off. Your numbers are 4, 12, 22, 26, 31, 42, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Express yourself, ask questions and sign up for something within your budget that puts a smile on your face. Choosing what's best for you will make a difference in how you view others and the world. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Be open-minded and considerate. Focus on something that benefits you instead of trying to convince others to share your beliefs. Give everyone the same freedom you wish for yourself. A steady pace will get you where you want to go. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Determine what you want to pursue. Someone will try to stand in your way if you are too vocal about your plans. Use intelligence, be willing to put in the effort and keep heading in the direction that beckons you. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't let your emotions stand in your way. Evaluate each situation before you say something you regret. Honesty and integrity will attract people who work just as hard as you do. Put your energy behind those who will do the same for you. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Unnecessary change and overspending will be your downfalls. Don't make a move that can jeopardize your income. Nothing is as it appears, and until you get what you want in writing, sit tight. Concentrate on self-improvement, not changing others. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Having an open mind will help you grasp information that will bring about unexpected positive change. Your commitment to what and who you love will play a role in your success and encourage you to expand your options and opportunities. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Keep your finances, health and legal matters to yourself. Trusting others with personal information will make you vulnerable. A strict rule regarding spending will help you avoid unnecessary purchases. Personal gain will be yours if you focus on self-improvement, not changing others. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll attract solid and stable people. Be receptive to information shared, but don't alter your life to benefit someone else. A physical risk will result in injury or illness. Pay attention to details and responsibilities. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put pressure on yourself to get things done. Don't believe everything you hear. If you want to get things done, be the one to call the shots. Emotional matters will escalate if trust issues arise. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Fixing up your surroundings will lift your spirits and prompt you to entertain. Limit your spending, but don't scrimp on items that encourage personal growth. Home improvements and investments will pay off and raise your profile among peers. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep your options open. Discussing your future with someone in a position of power will make you rethink how best to move forward. A lesson that encourages wealth will take you in a new direction. Put your energy into something that satisfies your soul. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A crash course in money management will get you moving in a lucrative direction. Knowing where every penny goes will help you tighten your purse strings to save for something meaningful. Distance yourself from people who are poor role models. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are helpful, emotional and persistent. You are flexible and responsive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5				1	2	9		
1		4		7		2		
		2	5	8		1		
	7	8			3			4
		5			6	7		
		6			8			
3	5		8	6	1		9	
6				3		8	5	
8			4	9	5	6		3

Difficulty: ★★ 7/11

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesturday's Answer

3	4	1	5	2	8	7	9	6
5	2	7	9	6	1	4	3	8
8	6	9	7	3	4	2	5	1
9	3	2	4	8	7	6	1	5
6	8	4	1	5	2	9	7	3
1	7	5	6	9	3	8	2	4
4	1	6	2	7	5	3	8	9
7	5	8	3	4	9	1	6	2
2	9	3	8	1	6	5	4	7

Difficulty: ★ 7/10

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

GETTING A REFUND **Solution: 9 letters**

P	R	O	O	F	R	E	R	U	T	A	N	G	I	S
N	R	E	O	P	E	N	E	D	E	B	I	T	M	E
T	I	E	W	I	T	E	M	S	C	R	E	R	A	N
F	G	A	G	A	U	R	P	D	C	R	E	E	I	I
I	H	E	L	A	R	I	I	A	O	T	E	D	L	L
G	T	S	M	P	N	D	H	T	N	E	R	D	R	N
N	S	T	S	A	M	A	S	E	D	G	E	A	I	O
I	R	N	Y	E	N	O	M	M	I	N	T	M	P	T
K	E	E	U	Y	C	E	C	O	T	A	T	A	R	O
C	L	M	S	S	C	O	M	H	I	H	E	G	O	Y
O	I	Y	G	A	E	I	R	B	O	Ⓒ	L	E	D	S
T	A	A	L	U	L	D	L	P	N	Ⓐ	L	D	U	E
S	T	P	S	H	O	E	S	O	R	Ⓢ	U	O	C	E
E	E	T	A	L	A	C	S	E	P	Ⓗ	F	S	T	F
R	R	E	D	N	E	T	P	I	E	C	E	R	E	H

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Cash, Change, Cloth, Complain, Condition, Credit, Damaged, Date, Debit, Escalate, Fees, Full, Gift, Home, Items, Letter, Mail, Manager, Money, Name, Online, Opened, Order, Payment, Policy, Process, Product, Proof, Receipt, Replacement, Restocking, Retailer, Return, Rewards, Rights, Sales, Ship, Shoes, Signature, Store, Tags, Tender, Terms, Toys, Used

Yesterday's Answer: Split Peas

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Rays defeat MLB-leading Braves to snap 7-game losing streak

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Isaac Paredes and Yandy Díaz homered as the Tampa Bay Rays snapped a season-high, seven-game skid with a 10-4 win over the Atlanta Braves on Sunday in a matchup of teams with the best records in baseball.

Zach Eflin (10-4) gave up two runs and four hits over five innings in a 77-pitch outing as Tampa Bay avoided the three-game series sweep.

Travis d'Arnaud homered for the MLB-best Braves, who are 20-3 since June 14 and head into the All-Star break at 60-29. Atlanta has homered in 26 consecutive games, the longest streak in modern-era franchise history.

Atlanta All-Star Bryce Elder (7-2) allowed seven runs, six hits and four walks in 3 1/3 innings, his shortest outing this season.

Braves slugger Matt Olson drove in a run with a single in the sixth inning for his 72nd RBI. He wound up three short of tying Eddie Mathews (1953) and Andruw Jones (2005) for the most in franchise history at the All-Star break.

CUBS 7, YANKEES 4

NEW YORK (AP)—Yan Gomes hit a tying pinch-hit two-run single in the seventh inning following a fielding error by second baseman Gleyber Torres, and Seiya Suzuki homered and hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the eighth in Chicago's win over New York.

The Cubs (42-47) won for the fifth time in 14 games since getting to within a game of .500 following a 9-1 win over St. Louis June 24 in London.

Chicago's Julian Merryweather (2-0) earned the win. Ron Marinaccio (4-4) took the loss.

Rookie Anthony Volpe hit a two-run homer and Kyle Higashioka added a solo shot for the Yankees.

PADRES 6, METS 2

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Manny Machado homered twice off Max Scherzer and drove in five runs for San Diego, which got six strong innings from Joe Musgrove to beat New York and take two of three in a series between high-priced, yet underwhelming, teams.

The Padres got to Scherzer (8-3) right away and handed him his first loss since May 3 at Detroit. Kim Ha-Seong hit a leadoff single to left, Fernando Tatis Jr. doubled off the center field wall with one out and then Machado drove a 2-2 pitch into the middle balcony of the four-story brick warehouse in the left field corner. Machado homered into the home run porch in right, his 15th, in the fifth for his third multi-homer game this season.

Scherzer, who had six wins in his previous 10 starts, allowed five runs and six hits in five innings, struck out seven and walked three.

ROYALS 4, GUARDIANS 1

CLEVELAND (AP)—Ryan Yarbrough won his first game back after being hit in the face by a line drive two months ago and Kansas City snapped a six-game losing streak.

Yarbrough (2-4) suffered several facial fractures when he was hit on May 7 against Oakland by a line drive clocked at 106.2 mph. The left-hander limited the Guardians to one run and six hits over six innings. Scott Barlow earned his 11th save.

Bieber (5-6) came in 6-0 in 14 career starts against the Royals. The right-hander allowed four runs and nine hits in 6 1/3 innings.

Isbel homered for Kansas City, which staggered into the All-Star break at 26-65 — the second-most losses before the break in franchise history.

Cleveland reached the season's unofficial midpoint in first place in the AL Central and at .500 (45-45) or better for the seventh year in a row.

MARLINS 7, PHILLIES 3

MIAMI (AP)—Bryan De La Cruz had a solo homer among his four hits as Miami took the three-game series from Philadelphia.

Jesús Sánchez and rookie Dane Myers also went deep for the Marlins, who reached the All-Star break with their best record in franchise history at 53-39.

Marlins starter Jesús Luzardo (8-5) struck out nine and allowed four hits over 6 1/3 innings.

Miami's Luis Arraez went 0 for 4 and his major league-leading batting average dropped to .383.

Edmundo Sosa had a two-run homer for the Phillies. Starter Aaron Nola (8-6) allowed eight hits and five runs with six strikeouts in six innings.

Phillies' star slugger Bryce Harper was kept out of the lineup as a precaution because of right elbow soreness, a day after getting hit by a pitch.

NATIONALS 7, RANGERS 2

WASHINGTON (AP)—Joey Meneses homered for the third consecutive day, Patrick Corbin earned his first home victory since May 20, and Washington sent AL West-leading Texas to its eighth loss in 11 games.

AP

Tampa Bay Rays' Isaac Paredes (17) celebrates his two-run home run with Jonathan Aranda in front of Atlanta Braves catcher Travis d'Arnaud during the first inning of a baseball game, Sunday, July 9, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Stone Garrett and Dominic Smith also homered for last-place Washington, which won the final two games of the series after dropping 15 of its previous 16 at Nationals Park.

Corbin (6-10) matched his victory total from all of last year, when he led the majors with 19 losses. He retired the first 10 men he faced and allowed one run and five hits while striking out six over seven innings.

Dane Dunning (8-2), one of Washington's first-round picks in 2016, pitched for the first time at Nationals Park and allowed four runs in 5 2/3 innings. The right-hander allowed seven hits while striking out four.

BLUE JAYS 4, TIGERS 3, 10 INNINGS

DETROIT (AP)—Nathan Lukes' RBI double in the 10th inning gave Toronto a comeback win over Detroit.

The Blue Jays trailed 3-1 with two outs in the ninth before Matt Chapman walked and Danny Jansen hit a homer over the Toronto bullpen in left-centerfield.

Daulton Varsho started the top of the 10th with a grounder to second and Zack Short threw out automatic Alejandro Kirk at third. Lukes followed with an RBI double off José Cisnero (2-2).

Yimi Garcia (3-3) pitched an inning of relief and earned the victory, while Jordan Romano picked up his 26th save.

Miguel Cabrera gave the Tigers a 1-0 lead with an RBI single - his 3,128th career hit - in the second and Riley Greene added a solo homer in the third.

RED SOX 4, ATHLETICS 3

BOSTON (AP)—Masataka Yoshida scored the tying run with good baserunning and hit a go-ahead homer two innings later as Boston rallied and extended its winning streak to five games.

J.P. Sears took a no-hitter into the fifth for Oakland despite allowing an unearned run in the first thanks to one of three A's errors.

Boston trailed 3-1 in the middle of the sixth before Adam Duvall hit a solo homer to lead off the bottom half, then Yoshida singled, stole second, took third on a bad throw from catcher Manny Piña and scored on Christian Arroyo's double to tie it. Yoshida bounced one off the top of the Green Monster to make it 4-3 in the eighth.

Brent Rooker had three hits for Oakland, including a 443-foot home run high off of the Green Monster light stanchion. Ken Waldichuk (2-6) took the loss.

Chris Martin (3-1) pitched a scoreless eighth for the win, and Kenley Jansen earned his 19th save.

BREWERS 1, REDS 0

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Wade Miley pitched six strong innings and Milwaukee made a first-inning run stand up in a win over Cincinnati.

The victory pulled the Brewers to within a game of the NL Central-leading Reds heading into the All-Star break. Milwaukee took two of three in the series.

A trio of Brewers relievers - Elvis Peguero, Joel Payamps and Devin Williams - combined to complete the shutout. Williams retired the side in order in the ninth to earn his 20th save in 22 tries.

Christian Yelich led off the Brewers half of the first with a ground-rule double off Ben Lively (4-5) and scored on Jess Winker's two-out single.

Miley (6-2) gave up four hits and tied a season high with eight strikeouts.

ORIOLES 15, TWINS 2

MINNESOTA (AP)—Anthony Santander hit two of Baltimore's six homers and the Orioles completed a series sweep of Minnesota.

Aaron Hicks added a three-run homer against his former team in the Orioles' seven-run fifth. Austin Hays, Ramón Urías and Adley Rutschman also went deep for Baltimore.

It's the second time in four games Baltimore scored at least 14 runs. They scored 14 against the Yankees in the series finale Thursday.

Former Twin Kyle Gibson (9-6) was sharp, striking out 11 and allowing just three hits in seven innings, two to Edouard Julien.

Baltimore chased Twins starter Joe Ryan (8-6) after just 4 2/3 innings. Ryan finished with a season-high 10 strikeouts.

CARDINALS 4, WHITE SOX 3, 10 INNINGS

CHICAGO (AP)—Paul DeJong had an RBI double in the 10th inning to give St. Louis a win over Chicago.

DeJong lined a pitch from Keynon Middleton (2-1) down the left field line, scoring automatic runner Nolan Gorman.

St. Louis catcher Willson Contreras hit a two-run homer and reached base four times with two hits, a walk and a hit by pitch.

JoJo Romero (1-0), the fourth Cardinals reliever, pitched two innings for his first career win.

MARINERS 3, ASTROS 1

HOUSTON (AP)—Jarred Kelenic hit a two-run double to back up a strong start by Logan Gilbert, lifting Seattle past Houston.

Gilbert (7-5) allowed just three hits in seven innings, with his only mistake coming when Martín Maldonado connected on a solo homer in the sixth. Matt Brash threw a scoreless eighth and Paul Seawald struck out two in the ninth for his 17th save.

The Mariners won three of four games in this series to head into the All-Star break having won seven of their past nine games.

Houston starter Brandon Bielak (4-5) allowed four hits and three runs—two earned—in five innings for the loss.

GIANTS 1, ROCKIES 0

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Logan Webb overcame a shaky start for a 10-strikeout, complete-game victory and San Francisco made J.D. Davis' solo homer in the fourth inning stand up in a win over Colorado as Rockies starter Kyle Freeland left the game with an apparent right shoulder injury.

Webb (8-7) labored through a 19-pitch first inning against the Rockies before settling in. The 26-year-old right-hander, who was winless in his previous two starts after allowing seven runs over 11 2/3 innings, allowed seven hits in his first career shutout and reached double-figure Ks for the fourth time this season.

Freeland (4-10) left the game in the seventh inning with an apparent injury to non-throwing shoulder. The 30-year-old left-hander was trying to field a bunt by Brett Wisely and dove to get the ball. He then rolled over and screamed in pain as teammates rushed to him. Colorado manager Bud Black and a team trainer also came out to examine the pitcher, who slowly walked off the field cradling his right arm.

PIRATES 4, DIAMONDBACKS 2

PHOENIX (AP)—Ji Man Choi hit a two-run homer, seven pitchers combined on a four-hitter and Pittsburgh ended a four-game losing streak with a win over Arizona.

Choi homered off Zach Davies (1-5) in the second inning and the Pirates bullpen took turns shutting down the Diamondbacks.

Osvaldo Bido (1-1) allowed a hit in 1 1/3 innings and All-Star closer David Bednar worked around a walk in the ninth inning for his 17th save in 18 chances after Jared Triolo hit a run-scoring single in the top half.

Djokovic's match vs Hurkacz suspended; continues Monday

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)—Novak Djokovic will need to put in some work to get to the Wimbledon quarterfinals as he seeks a fifth consecutive title and eighth overall at the All England Club.

Djokovic took the first two sets 7-6 (6), 7-6 (6)—after trailing in each tiebreaker—against 17th-seeded Hubert Hurkacz on Sunday night at Centre Court before their fourth-round match was suspended because it was getting too late to continue to play.

They did not start until about 8:50 p.m. because the preceding match lasted about three hours. After Djokovic claimed the second set when Hurkacz sent a forehand wide at 10:35 p.m., chair umpire Mohamed Lahyani announced to the crowd: "Ladies and gentlemen: Play suspended."

Local rules prevent Wimbledon matches from extending past 11 p.m., and so matches that approach that time often will be halted after a set ends.

They'll resume the fourth-rounder on Monday, with the winner to face No. 7 Andrey Rublev for a spot in the semifinals.

AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic, right, and Poland's Hubert Hurkacz leave the court after their men's singles match was suspended due to the lateness of the hour on day seven of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Sunday, July 9, 2023.

Djokovic could have been facing a much tougher night's sleep had things gone slightly differently.

Hurkacz — whose victory over Roger Federer in the 2021 Wimbledon quarterfinals was the last outing of the 20-time Grand Slam champion's career — pulled ahead 6-3 in the opening tiebreaker. That gave him a trio of set points.

But Djokovic stole the next five points on mistakes off Hurkacz's racket: a backhand into the net; a forehand into the net; a backhand into the net; a forehand return that landed long.

Hurkacz then was up 5-4 in the next tiebreaker, but never got closer that time, and Djokovic converted his second set point.

Earlier in that set, Djokovic lost a point when he lost his balance and his momentum carried him into the net. He and Hurkacz both laughed about it and threw their arms around each other's shoulders.

The 36-year-old Djokovic is trying to achieve all sorts of milestones during this fortnight. In addition to trying to equal Federer's men's records for most Wimbledon championships in a row in the Open era (also shared with Bjorn Borg) and most in a career (Martina Navratilova won nine women's trophies for the overall mark), Djokovic also can collect a 24th Grand Slam title.

He got No. 23 at the French Open last month to break a tie with Rafael Nadal for the men's mark and pull even with Serena Williams for the most by anyone in the Open era. Margaret Court won 24 across the amateur and professional eras.

Meanwhile, Victoria Azarenka said it "wasn't fair" that she was booed at Wimbledon after her loss to Ukrainian rival Elina Svitolina on Sunday.

Azarenka, who's from Belarus, had just lost a third-set tiebreaker and—knowing that Svitolina does not shake hands with Russian and Belarusian players after matches in protest of Russia's invasion of Ukraine—walked directly to the umpire to shake hands.

The two-time Grand Slam champion also seemed to give a slight wave to Svitolina, who won 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (9).

But as she gathered her equipment and began walking off No. 1 Court—where the crowd had been rooting for Svitolina—boos rained down.

"I can't control the crowd. I'm not sure that a lot of people were understanding what's happening," Azarenka said, suggesting the crowd had been drinking. "It wasn't fair. It is what it is. What can I do?"

It wasn't clear if fans thought Azarenka snubbed Svitolina, but the Belarusian shook her head as she walked off and banged her hands or fists together over her head.

At the French Open, it was the other way around for Ukrainian players. Marta Kostyuk was booed when she didn't shake hands at the net with Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus. Svitolina said she was also booed in Paris.

"For me personally, I think the tennis organizations, they have to come out with a statement that there will be no handshake between Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian players," Svitolina said. "I don't know if it's maybe not clear for people. Some people not really know what is happening. So I think this is the right way to do."

The 33-year-old Azarenka, who moved from Belarus to the United States as a teenager, said she's always had a good relationship with Svitolina.

"But what can I say about the crowd? There is nothing to say," Azarenka said. "She doesn't want to shake hands with Russian, Belarusian people. I respected her decision. What should I have done? Stayed and waited? Like, I mean, there's no thing that I could do that would have been right, so I just did what I thought was respectful towards her decision."

NBA reveals plans for in-season tournament that'll start in November

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Coming soon: the NBA Cup.

The NBA unveiled the details Saturday of its inaugural in-season tournament, which will have a prize pool of about $18 million and will be capped by a championship game — which won't count in the standings — in Las Vegas on Dec. 9. It's an event that NBA Commissioner Adam Silver wanted for years, giving teams a trophy to play for during the regular season.

And now, it's finally reality.

"This is a concept that has been rumbling around the league office for about 15 years," Silver said. "It's not a new concept in sports. For those that follow particularly international soccer, it's a long tradition of having in-season tournaments ... so we thought, what a perfect opportunity for a global league like the NBA and it's a perfect fit for our game."

The tournament payouts for players on standard contracts will be $500,000 apiece for those on the winning team, $200,000 apiece for those on the runner-up, $100,000 apiece for those on the teams that lose semifinal games and $50,000 for those on the teams that lose in the quarterfinals.

Two-way players on any of those teams are eligible for up to half those amounts, depending on how many games they spend on a roster during the tournament.

"I can see what the aim could be," said Miami guard Josh Richardson, who follows global soccer closely and understands the parallels Silver makes when comparing it to in-season tournaments that sport has around the world. "It gives you another chance to win something, for real. I think that's a big part."

Games will start on Nov. 3, being played mostly on Tuesdays and Fridays in November—except for Nov. 7, when the NBA will play no games to commemorate Election Day. That announcement came Saturday, and will mark the second consecutive year when the NBA has no games on that date with hopes of promoting civic awareness and engagement.

The Final Four will be in Las Vegas.

"This city knows how to host big events," Silver said.

Teams were assigned to a five-team group. They'll play one game against each other; the six group winners will make the quarterfinals, as will the best two second-place teams from the groups.

They were chosen as follows:

West Group A—Memphis, Phoenix, the Los Angeles Lakers, Utah and Portland.

West Group B—Denver, the Los Angeles Clippers, New Orleans, Dallas and Houston.

West Group C—Sacramento, Golden State, Minnesota, Oklahoma City and San Antonio.

East Group A—Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, Indiana and Detroit.

East Group B—Milwaukee, New York, Miami, Washington and Charlotte.

East Group C—Boston, Brooklyn, Toronto, Chicago and Orlando.

"I'm excited about this midseason tournament," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said. "I think it's going to add an element of energy and excitement for the players and coaches and the fans. I think it's a great idea."

Joe Dumars, the league's executive vice president of basketball operations and a Hall of Famer as a player, said he thinks players will like the idea—even if it takes some time.

"Everybody's not going to buy in right away," Dumars said. "That can't be the goal, that everybody's going to buy in from Day 1. These things take time. And I think as time goes on you can build this up and people can really get into it."

Tournament games, except for the championship game, will all count in the standings—much in the same way that the WNBA runs its Commissioner's Cup event.

It's been known for some time that teams will be getting only an 80-game schedule when the 2023-24 slate is released by the NBA in the coming weeks.

Games 81 and 82 will be added in December; this is where things get tricky.

Teams that don't make the knockout stage will be assigned two games against other non-knockout qualifiers, and those will be the missing two games on their schedules.

For the eight teams that make the knockout stage, the quarterfinal game becomes the 81st game added to their schedule. Quarterfinal losers—two from the East, two from the West—will play each other, and that'll be the 82nd game on their schedules. Semifinalists—again, two from the East, two from the West—will play, and that game becomes the 82nd game on their schedules.

That means the championship game will be one of 83 games on the schedule for the last two teams standing. And since the season is 82 games, that game won't count in the standings, nor will the stats count for anything. They'll be playing for money and the trophy.

Hyun Son tops July CWGA tourney

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hyun "Sunny" Son, second from right, topped the CNMI Women's Golf Association's July monthly tournament last June 8.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Hyun "Sunny" Son was in tune to win the CNMI Women's Golf Association's July monthly tournament last Saturday, June 8, at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

The 55-year-old owner Boss Karaoke shot a net score of 72 following a gross of 87. The 15-handicapper came away with a 43 in the front nine and a 44 in the back nine.

"I want to share my victory with our CWGA members. And playing with my best friend, Yuko Togawa, helped me a lot because I was able to play with a stable and enjoyable mind," said Son.

She said her best hole was hole No. 1.

"The first hole was good only in this tournament because it was a difficult hole for me, but I started with a par."

As for playing conditions, she said the weather was wonderful because it was not too hot, even though they were expecting some rain.

The Seoul, South Korea native has been playing golf for the past 18 years since.

Last month's winner, Flor Jones, finished runner-up this time after coming a stroke short with her net 73 built around a 47-45 in the front and back nines for a gross of 92 for the 19-handicapper.

Completing the Top 3 was Sae Hee Kim with her net 74 after she fired a gross of 86. The 13-handicapper had a split of 44-42 in front and back nines.

A total of eight CWGA members took part in the CNMI Women's Golf Association's July monthly tournament. The rest of the field, with their net scores, in parenthesis are as follows: Yuko Togawa (77), Doll Yamagishi (81), Janet Torres (83), Lorraine Babauta (86), and Clara Chang (92).

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Boss Karaoke owner Hyun "Sunny" Son played beautiful music with her golf clubs last Saturday to win the tourney at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort east course.

Va'a season resumes

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

After the conclusion of the Northern Marianas National Paddling Sports Federation Va'a V6/V1 Slalom Race series last month at the Kilili Beach in Susupe, the federation resumed their season last Saturday.

The V6 and V1 paddlers this time around will tackle the long distance races, which will continue into August, and then in September will be sprinting events—all of which will be held off the waters of Kilili Beach in Susupe.

Last Saturday's race started with the V6 distance race that was about 8.5 miles that started at the Kilili Beach, went north and exited from the lighthouse, then straight out and made a left turn at the green buoy channel marker and back.

There were four men's and four women's crews in the timed race. There were also three other women's crew of new paddlers that also raced with no points which started at Kilili Beach, went north and turned left on the black buoy just outside of McDonald's in Garapan and back—for 4.5 miles.

NMNPSF president Justin Andrew said in an interview after the V6/V1 Slalom Race series that they began their season with that to get everyone out, "hammer away the rust, and get ready for the long distance events coming up."

In the race series, he said he saw really good quality paddlers from the 50 to 60 paddlers who came out. "As we continue to train and continue to come out and race, it just improves our individual paddlers overall and our teams."

The races are also part of the overall preparations for the Pacific Games in November. They are also slated to take part in the 23rd Micronesia Cup paddling competition this October in Guam.

As for getting the neighboring islands of Tinian and Rota to join the events, Andrew said "that's actually in the plans. They don't have cones on the two islands and no paddlers there as far as I know, but eventually, we want to reach out to them and bring the program over so we can develop those two islands and they can be part of the national team when we have a national program."

Andrew then thanked all the paddlers who made time to come out to the race series. "We all have very different and busy schedules, so thanks to them and thanks to their coaches and clubs for putting in the time to prepare for this race. I really appreciate all of that."

The Marianas Outrigger Club swept both the men's and women's division of the V6 race; Pipit Ball was the fastest overall in the women's division V1 and open women's V1; Carter Calma was the fastest overall in the men's V1 and open men's V1; Vinalynn Oronigo was the fastest in the junior 19 girls V1; and Tyler Andrew was the fastest in the junior 19 boys V1 race.

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ment of Finance Secretary Tracy Norita and even Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to help with MGOC's outstanding balance to vendors and Mini Games officials.

"They're doing their best to, I guess, find some funds to square away first and foremost, the insufficient checks and of course, the bigger amount that we have to pay to the hotels, which might take longer than expected," he said.

Babauta thus asked for vendors and Mini Games officials' patience but promised that they would eventually be paid.

"Rest assured we will facilitate as much as possible and as soon as possible. In the meantime, please be patient because it's a new administration, a new secretary of Finance, and they have their work cut out for them."

In hindsight, Babauta said Mini Games officials originally weren't supposed to receive an honorarium and that item was not part of the budget.

"For whatever it's worth it was supposedly volunteer-based but the previous administration decided to give them compensation. That was a surprise for us and I was like, 'We got to pay the officials now?'"

If and when Finance pays out Mini Games officials, Babauta said they will most certainly issue new checks to facilitate the payments.

The MGOC official did say that Norita praised them for the outstanding hosting of the quadrennial event as they received good marks for accommodations, meals, logistics, and the overall organization of the Mini Games.

Norita confirmed that she met with Babauta earlier in the year and spoke about the outstanding balance owed to Mini Games vendors and officials.

"I did meet with him and listened to their concerns, and we did acknowledge we hope to assist them if possible. However they did exceed their budget by $2 million! It was 'promised' by the prior administration, however it was not allocated," she said.

Norita said Babauta did ask Finance for help on the remaining payments.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said it's sad that vendors for last year's Mini Games never got paid what they were promised.

"How were organizers allowed to spend well beyond their budget?" he asked.

Propst also questioned the decisions of former Finance secretary David DLG Atalig.

"If the SOF allowed them to overspend and exceed their budget, then is he liable for the failure to pay those vendors? Someone obviously needs to be held accountable. It is just another example of the Ralph DLG Torres administration spending taxpayer dollars like there was no tomorrow. Shameful."

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and with the help of the offense, got the win.

In their last at-bat, the Junior Nationals scored two runs after a walk, then an RBI base hit by Joell Borja, who then ran home on another RBI single by Albert Adriano.

This week should be the last week of regular season games with the postseason schedule to be determined.

Currently, the Cardinals are on top of the standings with nine wins; the Junior Nationals are second with a 7-2 record; third place is the Falcons at 6-3; the Brewers are 5-4; the middle of the pack are the CK Bears and the Natives at an even 4-4; the Blue Jays are 4-5; the D-9ers and Survivors are tied at 3-7; the Bandits are at 2-6; and the Braves are at the bottom at 2-7.

SECHARMIDAL

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2-2 record, 1.28 ERA, 41 hits, and seven earned runs.

Angelo Igitol is next with four innings and 16.2 innings pitched, 1.30 ERA, two wins, seven hits, and three earned runs; J.J. Lifoifoi has pitched four games, 14.2 innings pitched, one loss, 1.48 ERA, 10 hits, and three ER; Tim Cruz has pitched four games, 15.1 innings, three wins, 1.85 ERA, 16 hits, and four earned runs.

Isaiah Teigita has pitched eight games, 30.1 innings, 1.86 ERA, a 1-3 record, 20 hits, and eight earned runs; M.J, Sakisat has five games and 22.1 innings under his belt, 2-2 record, 1.90 ERA, 20 hits, and six earned runs; Benji Palacios has pitched five games and 18.1 innings, 2-1 record, 1.93 ERA, 16 hits, and five earned runs; and Jose Lizama Jr. has pitched seven games, 21.2 innings, has a 2-2 record, 2.31 ERA, 19 hits, and seven earned runs.

Second to Reyes in the strikeouts category is Teigita with 40; Lizama Jr. has 33; Kevin Kapileo has 31; Igitol and Secharmidal have 25 strikeouts each; Sakisat has 24; R.J. Riungel has 23; and Palacios has 21.

On the offensive side, Nokki Saralu from the Cardinals is the batting leader with a .567 batting average from hitting 17 out of 30 at-bats; second is Jylon Sablan from the Junior Nationals is second with a .500 average from hitting 11 out of 22 at-bats; the Cardinals' Brian Camacho is third with a .485 average from 16 hits from 32 at-bats.

Teigita has a .484 average with 16-33 at bats; Nathan Camacho has a .469 batting average from 15 out of 31 at-bats; J.R. Suel has a .458 average after hitting 11 out of 24; M.J. Aldan is at .450 from 9 out of 20; Shana Yamada is at .393 from 11 out of 28 at bats; Diego Camacho is at .381 from eight out of 21; and Isaiah Lizama is at .370 from 10 out of 27 at-bats.

Saralu leads the runs scored category with 20; Yamada has 18; Sablan has16; Isaiah Lizama has 14; Eli Aughenbaugh has 13; while Teigita, Brian and Nathan Camacho, and Jerald Cabrera have 12 each.

Brian Camacho leads the doubles with four; Suel, Poland Masaharu, Henry Lizama, Vicente Camacho, Yamada, Saralu, Nathan Camacho, Cabrera, Jerome Delos Santos, and Joell Borja have three each.

Brian Camacho also leads RBIs with 14; Saralu has 13; Nathan Camacho and Poland Masaharu have 12 each; Franko Nakamaru has 11; and Yamada and Achilles Evangelista have nine each.

Josenio Alvarez and Brian Camacho are tied with the most triples with three each; and Ben Leon Guerrero, Saralu, Harry Nakamura, Jordan Suel, and J-Boy Mendiola have two each.

Devyn Flores, Henry Lizama, and Saralu have hit the only home runs of the season with one each.

Rays defeat MLB-leading Braves to snap 7-game losing streak.

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Hyun Son tops July CWGA tourney.

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ON UNPAID BALANCE TO VENDORS, OFFICIALS

Ex-CEO of MGOC asks for patience

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

More than a year after the end of the very successful staging of the Pacific Mini Games Northern Marianas 2022, the organizing committee's CEO is asking vendors and officials for patience on unremitted payments and honorariums.

Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta confirmed that the MGOC still owes money to vendors and officials. He, however, didn't disclose the amount.

Babauta said the MGOC's coffers were compromised when former MGOC staff Patricia Bermudes Aldan forged a $46,000 check.

That coupled with the MGOC's lack of an accountant, Babauta said, resulted in them not paying off receivables and honorariums.

While the previous administration of former governor Ralph DLG Torres managed to provide funds for the smaller accounts, apparently there were "quite a few checks out there that were floating and were not deposited timely," according to Babauta.

And since the Bank of Guam account MGOC used to have was closed due to the breach, check holders had no way of en-cashing their checks anymore.

Moving forward, Babauta said he has met with Depart-

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Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta assured vendors and Mini Games officials that they're working with the Department of Finance to fulfill their financial obligations.

Junior Nationals continue hot-streak

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The No. 2 seed Junior Nationals continue their dominance in the major league and extend their hot-streak during their makeup game against the last place Braves, 4-2, in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The Junior Nationals drew first blood in the third inning after two runs were scored by Jylon Sablan and J.R. Suel.

It was 2-0 until the fifth inning when the Braves' Jonathan Norita found an opening for a base hit, stole second base, and came home. Teammate Ton Norita walked and scored on an RBI single by Manny Camacho.

The Braves were fortunate to have scored two runs when they did because they were shut down in order in the first four innings.

Nine of their batters were struck out by Junior Nationals pitcher Benji Palacios at this point and with the help of pitcher J.P. Sablan later in the game, managed to put up goose eggs on the scoreboard after they allowed only one more hit in the sixth inning.

Only four hits were allowed by both Junior Nationals pitchers throughout the game

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LEIGH GASES
Junior Nationals pitcher Angelo Igitol throws a pitch during one of their games in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Secharmidal, Reyes are SBL pitching leaders

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

As of July 9, the C.K. Bears' Virgil Secharmidal is the leading pitcher, while Jason Reyes has the most strikeouts in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League season so far.

Secharmidal has pitched 14 innings in five games, has two wins, zero ERA, and only four hits against him; Reyes is the strikeout king with 45 strikeouts.

Second to Secharmidal is the Cardinals' Nathan Camacho who's pitched three games, 14.2 innings, has three wins, 0.99 ERA, two earned runs, and seven hits against him.

Reyes is third in the pitching leaders with 10 games and 38.2 innings pitched, a

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CK Bears' Virgil Secharmidal, fifth from right, is the pitching leader in the 2023 Tan Holdings-Saipan Baseball League as of yesterday.